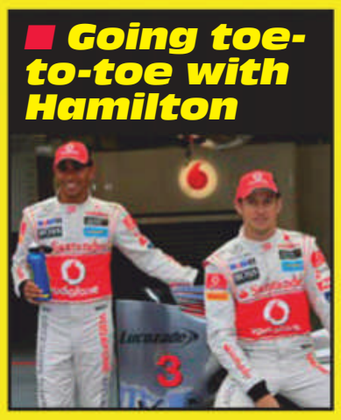
EXCLUSIVE INTERVIEW

JENSON TACKLES THE READERS' Q&A!

The 2009 world beater on



■ Going toe-to-toe with Hamilton

■ A desire to conquer Le Mans

■ His IndyCar near-miss

■ George Russell's bright future

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MOTORSPORT NEWS

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British F1 superstar was on the point of switch from McLaren to Italy in the early 2010s

BUTTON: I WAS ON THE CUSP OF A DRIVE FOR FERRARI IN FORMULA 1

Button (l) nearly joined Ferrari

By Graham Keilloh

Formula 1 champion Jenson Button has told Motorsport News he almost moved from McLaren to Ferrari in the early 2010s and says he would love to have raced for the legendary Italian team.

The 15-time grand prix winner tackles the MN readers' Q&A this week and gives a revealing insight into talks that almost meant he switched to Maranello in the early part of the 2010s decade.

Button told Motorsport News: "There was a good possibility sort of eight years ago but it didn't materialise at the end. Pretty much contracts were ready to go but for many different reasons it didn't [happen] and I was probably better off where I was.

"There's just something about that team. I would love to have raced for Ferrari at some point."

On whether the move meant racing alongside Fernando Alonso, Button said "possibly".

Full story, p4

Jenson Button Q&A, P14

SPECIAL FEATURE

WHAT WE'RE LOOKING FORWARD TO IN 2021

Our MN staff look ahead to the treats in store over the next 12 months P20

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ESCORT BRAKING PARTS

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Classic Ford wheels from £69.00 £82.80

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X-Flow ally radiator	£179.60	£215.52
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Spedo cable bulkhead grommet		£5.20	£6.24
Throttle pedal pad		£5.20	£6.24
Brake and clutch pedal pads	pair	£8.00	£9.60
Shock absorber top caps	pair	£13.90	£16.68
Rear bumper side plugs, set of 4		£9.90	£11.88
Oil line bulkhead grommet		£5.10	£6.12
Brake servo rod bellows		£5.20	£6.24

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COMMENT

Photo: Motorsport Imagess

Jenson Button burst onto the scene in 2000 when he was picked by Williams for F1

THE MAN FOR THE FAIRY TALE

Fairy tales don't come more emotional than Jenson Button's Formula 1 world championship victory in 2009. Off the back of a team on the brink of collapse, the British ace helped to galvanise the renamed Brawn squad and take it to motorsport's highest high.

The fact it was Jenson behind the wheel seemed highly appropriate. His career too had been something of a fairy tale. He had already been earmarked as Britain's next great motorsport hope through his time in Formula Ford and Formula 3 before he impressed the Williams team enough in a shootout in Barcelona to secure his seat in the top flight just three years after he had first stepped into a racing car.

There were ebbs and flows along the way, and the biggest hiccup came at Benetton (and then Renault) with team boss Flavio Briatore declaring the Somerset starlet nothing more than a playboy. That mud stuck for a long while.

But his time with BAR, on to Honda and then riding the Brawn roller coaster were the same time as when Button was finally taken to the heart of fans. A refreshingly honest racer with a superb work ethic, the public got behind the driver and he carried the hopes of the nation into the latter part of 2009 before he was finally crowned in Brazil.

The Lewis Hamilton star was firmly in the ascendant by that point, and it was only a year later that Button teamed up with his countryman at McLaren. While Lewis was the coming man, McLaren's commercial team privately admitted that Jenson-branded merchandise was outstripping his new team-mate's. It was a mark of the respect that Button had gained from a global audience.

He is still seeking out new adventures in motorsport and we're thankful for that. The final chapter in the Button story has yet to be written, but any success that comes his way in whatever he chooses to race will be well earned. Graham Keilloh's interview with the world champion is wide-ranging and eye-opening. It starts on page 14.

Elsewhere in this issue, we look ahead to what we are hoping to enjoy in 2021. While nothing it set in stone yet, the desire to get back out there and enjoy the sport we love so much has never been stronger. We just hope that there is some semblance of normality before the season is out.

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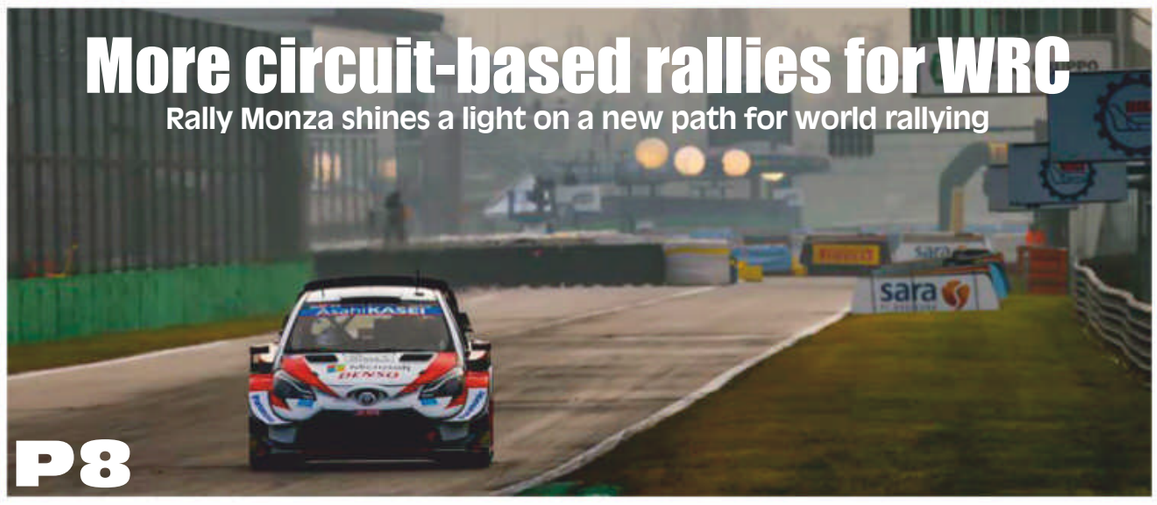

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RACING NEWS

Button: Ferrari move from McLaren was close

Formula 1 star Jenson Button has told Motorsport News he nearly switched from McLaren to Ferrari in the early 2010s, and would have loved to race for the Italian outfit.

The 2009 world champion joined McLaren in 2010 and won eight races in his first three seasons there, and remained with the squad until his F1 retirement in 2017. He told MN however that during his McLaren spell negotiations for a Ferrari move reached an advanced stage, with contracts in place. Button signed new McLaren contracts starting in 2012 and '15 while contemporary reports linked him with a Ferrari move for 2013.

"There was a good possibility sort of eight years ago that [a Ferrari move] would have happened but it just didn't materialise at the end," Button told MN. "Pretty much contracts were ready to go and it almost happened but for many different reasons it didn't and to be fair I was probably better off where I was anyway at McLaren."

When asked by MN if the Ferrari move would have meant racing alongside two-time world champion Fernando Alonso, Button replied "possibly". Alonso's Ferrari spell stretched from 2010 to '14.

●*Jenson Button MN readers' Q&A, p14*

Button could have joined Alonso

Formula E opener in Chile runs flat

The opening round of the 2021 Formula E campaign that was due to take place in Chile has been delayed amid the ongoing concerns over the global health pandemic.

The event was due to be hosted in Santiago on January 16-17, but growing travel restrictions between countries has meant that series bosses have axed what was due to be a double header. Category chiefs have said that they are planning to reschedule the rounds later on in the season.

A statement on social media read: "The races will no longer take place as a double-header on January 16-17 and we are working with the city to finalise dates on which to stage the races later in Q1 of 2021."

The cancellation means that the all-electric category is now due to kick off with its first night race at Diriyah in Saudi Arabia on February 26-27. That is will to be followed by 10 rounds, including a return to the UK with a race at London's ExCeL centre scheduled for July 24-25.

Formula E opener is on hold

MOTORBASE CHANGES HANDS AHEAD OF 2021 TOURING CAR SEASON

Shaun Hollamby and Pete Osborne take over the Ford Focus tin-top attack

Photos: Mike Hills Speed Images, Motorsport Images

Motorbase has new owners for 2021

Osborne (l), Bartrum (c) and Hollamby conclude deal

By Matt James

The Motorbase Performance British Touring Car Championship team will be under new management for the 2021 season with Shaun Hollamby and businessman Pete Osborne taking the reins.

The operation will run four Ford Focus machines in the 2021 contest under the Motorbase name. Former Motorbase boss David Bartrum will remain with the squad for the next few weeks as a consultant to oversee the handover.

New managing director Osborne, father of BTCC racer Sam and a former TVR Tuscan and Porsche racer, and Hollamby, who will take the mantle as team principal, will operate from Motorbase's Kent workshops.

Hollamby said: "Motorbase Performance is synonymous with everything that is great about British touring cars and a huge deal of credit must go to David Bartrum and his team for what they have achieved. Their work gives us a great foundation to build on as we hope to go from strength to strength in the coming years."

Hollamby joined the BTCC in 2010 with his AmDTuning.com team, driving a VW Golf. Since then, the team has expanded and last season Hollamby and AmD oversaw the new MB Motorsport team, which ran two FK2-spec Honda Civic Type Rs. Hollamby will still have a relationship with MB Motorsport, and details of that deal are due to be released soon.

Bartrum's Motorbase team has been in the BTCC since 2006 and has taken 33 race wins. It won the Independent Teams contest in 2016, when it also took the Independents' Driver Trophy honours with Andrew Jordan driving. Bartrum said he would be keeping a close eye on the team's progress.

He said: "It is a massive compliment that AmD's Shaun Hollamby and Pete Osborne wish to purchase the team. I've enjoyed building this team from the ground up over the years that has seen Motorbase achieve tremendous success both on and off the track. I have to thank everyone associated with Motorbase over the years, including staff, drivers and our many partners, who have helped this team grow to become one of the top outfits in the BTCC paddock."

●*Motorbase and the future, feature, p12*

COOK AND CREES FOR BTCC RETURN WITH BTC

Cook and Crees will lead the line for BTC Racing again

Josh Cook and Michael Crees have re-signed for the BTC Racing British Touring Car Championship team for 2021 and will drive its Honda Civic FK8 machine fitted with Swindon-tuned powerplants.

The duo raced for the three-car team in 2020, with Cook winning three races and Crees claiming the Jack Sears Trophy, which was held last year for drivers who had not taken a podium before the start of the campaign.

They will drive two of the front-wheel-drive Japanese hatchbacks, and team boss Steve Dudman, who is now in sole charge of the team, has confirmed that a third driver is set to be revealed in the next two weeks. He also revealed that the team would move away from a Honda powerplant and instead use the bespoke TOCA BTCC engine.

Dudman said: "Everyone knows Josh's credentials as a multiple race-winner in touring cars, and we are all confident he will be able to mount a genuine challenge for the outright BTCC crown, as well as the Independents' Trophy title.

"Winning the Jack Sears Trophy was a great achievement [for Michael] and the target next year will certainly be for him to score regular overall points finishes and challenge for the outright top 10."

ASTON CANS WORKS GT PROGRAMME TO FOCUS ON ITS CUSTOMER CARS

Aston Martin has canned its GTE Pro World Endurance Championship team and will instead concentrate on its customer support programme.

The British firm has been involved in top-flight GT racing as a works team, through the Prodrive operation, since the WEC was formed 2012. It first ran Astons in international motorsport in 2005 with the DBR9.

Aston, which is now under the stewardship of Lawrence Stroll, will enter Formula 1 this year as part of the rebranded Racing Point attack.

Bosses of the firm say it will now switch focus to looking after the customer Aston Martin Vantage GT efforts. Prodrive has been contracted to build and sell the GTE, GT3 and GT4 versions of the machine.

Aston Martin Racing president David King said: "The year [2020] has been one of unprecedented success for [the] Vantage in international motorsport. At all levels, from GTE, through GT3 to the entry-level GT4, we have experienced significant championship success.

"But there is more to come from [the] Vantage, which is why we have concluded that now is the time for us to shift the weight of factory support to our partners as we go in pursuit of success in the most important GT events."

Works Aston Martin was the top dog at Le Mans last year

Photo: Jakob Ebrey, IMS Photography/Chris Owens, Optimum Motorsport, Oliver Read

Button's squad to tackle DTM

BUTTON'S TEAM ROCKET SQUAD TO RACE IN DTM

Jenson Team Rocket RJN is to race the McLaren 720S GT3 in the new-spec German championship this year

By Graham Keilloh

Jenson Button's British GT squad Jenson Team Rocket RJN will compete in DTM in 2021 racing the McLaren 720S, with the German category switching to GT3 regulations.

The team, co-owned by Button with Le Mans LMP2 winner Chris Buncombe and partnered with established RJN Motorsport, was formed in 2019 and had a sensational 2020 with its single-720S British GT effort. Michael O'Brien and James Baldwin won on debut at Oulton Park and were consistent frontrunners. Button and Buncombe raced a second McLaren with the team in the season-closing Silverstone 500.

Button told Motorsport News that the squad also intends to compete in GT World Challenge Europe with two cars – as it planned in 2020 before Covid's impact – and its ultimate ambition is to race at Le Mans.

Button said: "I've always loved DTM and it's exciting to see the series evolve into this new chapter with GT3. I've known Gerhard [Berger, DTM boss] for a long time. I'm pleased to be able to expand our plans with McLaren."

Buncombe added. "When we set out on this journey as a team, it has always been our ambition to evolve and grow, competing in a number of different championships whilst working closely with a manufacturer. When this DTM opportunity was presented to us it felt like a great fit."

Jenson Team Rocket RJN, which has not confirmed its number of entries or drivers for its DTM effort, follows fellow British GT squad 2 Seas Motorsport in racing the 720S in DTM next season.

Button's ultimate sights for his team are on Le Mans

OPTIMUM TO MAKE ASIAN LE MANS SERIES DEBUT

Optimum Motorsport will make its Asian Le Mans Series debut next month running Inception Racing's entry with Brendan Iribe, Ollie Millroy and an unconfirmed driver in its McLaren 720S GT3.

The ALMS 2021 season's four races are all at Abu Dhabi's Yas Marina circuit, starting with an early-February double header. British-based McLaren customer squad Optimum also competes in this weekend's Gulf 12 Hours with Iribe and Millroy among its drivers. Optimum last year competed in British GT, International GT Open and GT World Challenge Europe.

Optimum boss Shaun Goff said: "It's a big programme for us; we continue to grow as a team. We need to find the right combination for the third driver in the car to ensure that we can battle for GT honours in Abu Dhabi."

Millroy: gets ALMS campaign

RADICAL UNVEILS NEW OPTIONS AND FORMATS FOR 2021

Radical Sportscars has outlined new titles, classes, formats and options among its unveiled racing plans for the 2021 season.

All of Radical's sports prototype models are now eligible for a UK Radical-supported series, with its headline Radical Challenge championship – entering its 20th season – becoming multi car by bringing back the Masters class after a five-year absence. This allows various models such as the SR10 and SR8 to join the grid; SR8s last were eligible for the Challenge in 2013.

Radical's Saturday-based SR1 Cup has a new 'Sunday Supplement' option allowing drivers to also join the Challenge endurance programme on Sundays. Radical has also added new Club Sprint and Club Enduro Cup titles, both aimed at Clubman SR3 competitors, with Club Sprint a similar format to Radical's Clubman's Cup from the 2000s.

Radical has reunited its various UK championships to run on the same race weekends and has unveiled a revised six-round 2021 calendar that begins at Snetterton in April and includes a Spa visit in June.

Radical in 2021 also is launching a series of 'European Festival' race and track events giving current and prospective Radical owners opportunities to experience grand prix circuits. More details on this are to be released soon.

Much is new for Radical in '21

Force Indy is launched with aim to develop black staff

PENSKE-MENTORED AFRICAN AMERICAN TEAM ENTERS USF2000

Team Penske is to mentor a new African American-run team Force Indy that is set in 2021 to compete in USF2000, the first rung on America's 'Road to Indy' ladder.

Force Indy boss Rod Reid brings decades of experience including with NXG Youth Motorsports that has introduced motorsport-related education to over 2300 students from under-represented communities. Force Indy plans to hire and develop black mechanics, engineers, staff and drivers, and is part of IndyCar's new 'Race for Equality & Change' initiative.

The team, as part of its mentorship by the famous Penske outfit, in its first season will be based in Concord, North Carolina receiving guidance from Penske personnel.

Reid said: "I started a race team in 1984, and I have always had a desire to have a team of talented individuals who look like me in the professional ranks of the sport. I have been in and around the sport for 40 years, and this is just the culmination of years of hard work."

Roger Penske added: "To lend our support to an effort like this is a natural. Together, we'll work to not only get this new team off the ground but continue to support it and its mission as it continues down a path to compete at the top level."

The team will race with #99 in honour of Dewey 'Rajo Jack' Gatson, an African-American racer and mechanic who won several events but never got an Indianapolis 500 race opportunity.

BRITISH GT GETS FIRST SILVER-AM ENTRY WITH NEARYS

The British GT championship has its first Silver-Am entry under its new GT3 class structure with ABBA Racing and its father-and-son driving duo Richard and Sam Neary returning in 2021.

British GT for 2021 is replacing the Silver Cup, with pairings of two Silver-graded drivers, with Silver-Am wherein one driver is Bronze-graded.

Neary Sr returns for a sixth consecutive British GT campaign while 18-year-old Sam made his category debut last year. The Mercedes AMG GT3 duo, as a Pro-Am entry, finished 11th in 2020's drivers' standings with a best result of sixth place.

"It's great to be back with an unchanged line-up and car, and an opportunity to fight for a class title in 2021," said Richard. "Last year was all about getting Sam up to speed and he surpassed our expectations."

Father-and-son Mercedes entry in Silver-Am return

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RACING NEWS

O'Sullivan has done F3 tests

Photo: Jakob Ebrey, Tony Todd

Carlin pilots have won three of last four BRDC F3 crowns

O'SULLIVAN MOVES TO BRDC FORMULA 3 WITH CARLIN

The breakout star from British F4 in 2020 graduates to BRDC F3 this season continuing with Carlin

By Graham Keilloh

Rising star Zak O'Sullivan will graduate to BRDC Formula 3 with frontrunning Carlin in 2021 after his impressive freshman single-seater campaign with the team in British Formula 4 last season.

O'Sullivan, who turns 16 next month, took nine F4 wins in 2020 and missed the championship after half points were awarded in the rain-truncated finale, leaving him four adrift of Luke Browning. Carlin drivers have won three of the last four BRDC F3 crowns.

O'Sullivan said: "My long-term goal is to reach Formula 1 and after a successful first season together, I'm delighted to be staying with Carlin as I take my next step towards that aim. We get to run on the GP versions of circuits [in BRDC F3] and we also go to Spa – I've driven it a lot on sims but never raced on it.

"I've already had three tests in the car and have really enjoyed it every time. It's a sizeable step up from the F4 car and I always enjoy jumping into something quicker. I'm also pleased to be staying with my engineer Anthony Grenier as we worked well together in F4 last season."

Team owner Trevor Carlin added: "We are thrilled to keep Zak in the Carlin family and take him to the British Formula 3 championship where he will doubtless hit the ground running. He's already been impressive in winter testing and has used everything he's learnt in his brilliant debut season in 2020 and is applying that knowledge in the more powerful British F3 car."

Colleges and universities will compete with regulars

STUDENT CONTEST ADDED TO CITYCAR CUP

The Student Motorsport Challenge has been added to the CityCar Cup championship in 2021, allowing colleges and universities to compete alongside regular competitors and offer practical learning to students.

The programme comes from a new partnership between the British Racing & Sports Car Club and Student Motorsport, a membership network for motorsport-related careers and education.

The colleges and universities, as well as fighting for overall on-track honours, will also compete for various awards, including ones for team professionalism, car preparation plus media and commercial activity. Currently a six-college roster is looking to confirm funding and entries.

The budget CityCar Cup was launched last season for the Peugeot 107, Citroen C1 and Toyota Aygo and this year gets championship status.

Student Motorsport's operations director Patrick Hathaway said: "It's not an exaggeration to say this is one of the best opportunities in the UK for colleges and universities to compete in motorsport. What's more, teams can get going in a variety of ways. The educator [also] can tap into the commercial and promotional benefits sports marketing offers."

BRSCC's head of formulae development Greg Graham added: "We quickly recognised that the CityCar Cup championship could provide an ideal platform to support this project."

Educators can register interest via studentmotorsport.com/challenge-series or enquiries@studentmotorsport.com.

THOMAS IKIN JOINS BRITISH F4 WITH ARDEN

Karting graduate Thomas Ikin will race in the British Formula 4 championship in 2021 with Arden Motorsport.

The 17-year-old is also part of the Arden-affiliated Young Racing Driver Academy (YRDA) and joins the already-announced Zak Taylor in the line-up (*see MN, December 31*).

Ikin said: "After 18 months of working with YRDA, it is a great feeling to finally be able to put into practice all of my training, both in and out of the simulator, with [YRDA directors] Steve Hutchinson and Chris Ray and progress into the Formula 4 team.

"I've really enjoyed working with the team so far over the tests I've completed. They have helped me learn and progress a lot, and I feel very much at home here."

IN BRIEF

SMRC's Denham retires

Sandy Denham retired as Scottish Motor Racing Club chairman and director on December 31 after nearly 30 years' service to the club. Denham's achievements include an agreement with TOCA in the early 2000s for a number of the club's championships to feature on British Touring Car Championship weekends, and developing the club's Mini Cooper Cup and Scottish C1 Cup. Multiple Scottish Mini Cooper Cup title-holder Vic Covey Jr takes over as chairman while chief marshal Richard Burrell becomes vice chairman.

A-One improvements

Revolution has confirmed that the power of its A-One prototype from the 3.7-litre Ford V6 has been increased by 20bhp to 400bhp for 2021 with the introduction of a new intake and exhaust system. Additionally the car's innovative 'double halo' cockpit protection structure will now be mandatory when racing in the Sports Prototype Cup and fitted as standard to all new cars.

McNeilly returns

Liam McNeilly will return for a second Ginetta Junior campaign with Fox Motorsport in 2021. The squad entered a single car for 14-year-old McNeilly's car-racing debut last year, with two eighth places his best results. Team principal Paul McNeilly said: "Liam was inexperienced, even by rookie standards, this year [2020]. He'll be a much stronger package [in 2021] as part of what we hope will be a multi-car programme."

HENRY AND DE HAAN FIRST JOINT WINNERS OF ANNUAL GINETTA JUNIOR SCHOLARSHIP

For the first time, two drivers have been crowned winners of Ginetta Junior's annual scholarship with Maurice Henry and Robert de Haan both getting fully-funded 2021 championship seasons.

The pair emerged victorious from last month's three-day competition that comprised driving, fitness and media assessments at Ginetta's Blyton Park test track, overseen by various experts including Ginetta alumni Max Coates and Jake Hill. A field of 65 was whittled down to four for the final shootout driving a Ginetta G40.

The close contest between 15-year-old karting and junior rallying graduate Henry and 14-year-old Dutch junior karting world champion de Haan meant Ginetta chairman Lawrence Tomlinson made the unprecedented decision to award two scholarships. Both drivers will therefore make their car-racing debuts this year.

Henry and de Haan both get Ginetta Junior campaigns

Ginetta motorsport boss Ashley Gallagher said: "The level of talent and professionalism in the entrants this year was extremely high. Both Maurice and Robert were exceptional throughout the contest. When it came down to the final decision, there was truly nothing between them."

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

RALLY NEWS

Solberg is Hyundai man

SOLBERG AND MIKKELSEN FIRM UP 2021 PLANS

Oliver Solberg has joined Hyundai Motorsport on a two-year agreement, which is expected to result in a step up to a Rally1 car in 2022 while WRC refugee Andreas Mikkelsen has committed to both WRC 2 and the European Rally Championship in 2021.

Solberg said: "Joining Hyundai Motorsport is incredible. It's not just a real thrill for me, it will be fantastic to learn from everyone. We will go into the championship with a winning mentality and with the important responsibility of representing Hyundai around the world. I am also happy to have another young driver, Ole Christian Veiby, in the WRC 2 set-up."

Mikkelsen meanwhile will team up with Toksport and will help develop Skoda's new-for-2022 Rally2 Fabia, and hasn't ruled out selected World Rally Car outings either if he can land sufficient funding.

"This is a great step towards [my] goal to be back in the WRC," Mikkelsen said. "I have one aim and that is to dominate every rally that I am doing, winning every ERC round and every WRC 2 round, that's my sole focus."

MORE MONZA-STYLE EVENTS COULD APPEAR IN THE WRC

FIA rally director Yves Matton says he is fully in favour of diversifying the WRC roster

Photos: Hyundai, Toyota, M-Sport, FIA ERC

The WRC's season finale went against the mould

By Graham Lister

The Rally Monza template could be copied by other World Rally Championship events after Yves Matton, the FIA rally director, gave the format his seal of approval.

Rally Monza hosted the WRC finale last month with legs one and three using parts of the Italian Grand Prix track and perimeter roads, while leg two was based on mountain stages away from the venue.

Matton said: "In a matter of weeks, [the Rally Monza organisers] did a great work to deliver an event that was really interesting with a mixture of stages on a track with more traditional stages in the mountains.

"Some people criticised that rallying on a track is not part of the DNA of rallying but the event provided a true challenge. If, in the future, we have to organise rallies in another way, we now know what is possible without losing the DNA of the sport.

"I am fully in favour of diversity and not to have events that are similar. It makes sense to have one or two events in the championship that were like Rally Monza."

Rally Monza was widely praised by teams and drivers. It's a reserve event on the 2021 WRC calendar.

Latvala will swap overalls for jacket

TOYODA: I TRUST LATVALA TO LEAD TOYOTA

Toyota chairman Akio Toyoda insists Jari-Matti Latvala will succeed in his role after taking over from Tommi Makinen as the marque's WRC team principal.

Latvala, 35, was a surprise choice for what will be his first position in team management.

"He has a strong sense of responsibility," Toyoda said. "His ability as a manager is unproven, but he always thinks of the fans and his team-mates. He cared about everybody in the team like mechanics and engineers and always talked to them. The attributes that we have in common between us were the deciding factors for entrusting the team to him. I believe these will bring the strength to the team. I trust him to lead."

Latvala told Motorsport News that his decision to accept Toyota's job offer has resulted in him calling time on his WRC driving career after he had hoped to make a full-time return behind the wheel when the new Rally1 era comes on stream in 2022.

However, he will be allowed to continue to contest selected historic events when his Toyota commitments allow.

"I can't stop driving, it's in my blood," Latvala, who drove for Toyota between 2017-19 said. "I will retire from [driving in the] WRC but I will continue with my classic Toyotas."

KEY CHANGES AND CLARIFICATION TO FIA SERIES

The FIA has confirmed that six World Rally Championship rounds must take place in 2021 for the various titles to be awarded.

Six events would be 50% of the planned 12-event roster for the upcoming season. The FIA reserves the right to "define the number of rallies that must take place for the titles to be awarded in the three support championships, namely WRC 2, WRC 3 and Junior WRC", according to the governing body.

If an FIA regional rally championship, such as the European or Middle East championship, totals four events or fewer due to Covid-19 restrictions, all rounds will count regardless of a championship's usual scoring structure.

Meanwhile, the European championship has become the first to offer a standalone category for the new Rally3 category as ERC1 Junior becomes ERC Junior. The champion will get a season in the Junior WRC in 2022 when the championship is expected to switch to Rally3 rules.

ERC drivers under 28 in Rally2 cars who previously contested ERC1 Junior, such as Ireland's Callum Devine, will benefit from a package of incentives from Eurosport Events aimed at reducing costs but raising media exposure.

Half of the WRC rounds need completed for '21 titles

INGRAM SELLING SHARES IN HIMSELF FOR WRC BID

Chris Ingram is selling shares in himself to raise the cash for a World Rally Championship campaign this season.

Ingram has only managed one competitive start – in a Renault Clio RSR Rally5 – since he won the European title in 2019 after hoped for funds for a combined ERC/WRC 2 with Toksport for 2020 failed to materialise due to Covid.

In an effort to realise his WRC ambitions, Ingram is trying to attract £900,000 in support via investors by offering them a percentage of his future earnings in return for them backing a WRC 2 or WRC 3 programme in 2021.

"After winning the European title, teams are supporting me with a huge subsidisation of costs, but I still need to secure a lot of sponsorship and investment," Ingram told the BBC Sport website.

"I'm up against drivers who are financially backed by global brands, their country's motorsport governing bodies or even wealthy families. It's a tough fight but I know I have more ability, passion and hunger than them all. My all-time ambition is to win the World Rally Championship."

Financial struggles are nothing new for the 2017 ERC3 Junior champion as he was only able to complete his 2019 European title-winning season after his mother organised a crowdfunding effort.

WRC is the aim for Ingram

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RALLY NEWS

GROWING APPETITE FOR SINGLE-VENUE FOREST RALLIES

Motorsport UK chairman David Richards thinks condensed forest rallies could be a big part of the future

By Luke Barry

Leading players in UK rallying have suggested single-venue forest rallies could become more common in the future, with Motorsport UK chairman David Richards labelling them as "an interesting template".

Events like the M-Sport Return to Rally Stages and Rali Adfer Coedwigoedd Cymru have been based entirely within forests in August and December respectively as a means to restart rallying under Covid-19 conditions. But those who were at the Welsh event last month reckoned the format could work post-Covid too.

Richards told MN: "The thing I liked about it, and it's a bit like the MN events at the race circuits which I think are superb, you've got all the infrastructure in one place. If we can make them economically viable – and that's the next thing we have to consider, the cost of the forestry and any other aspects of it – then I think it's an interesting template rather than the bigger larger events that are quite complicated to organise and very risky for clubs. Why couldn't we be organising half a dozen of these events instead?"

Single-venue forest events were trialled twice in 2020

Rally organiser Alyn Edwards thinks the format would be perfect for nurturing junior drivers and would appeal to others too. "It's like a bus or a train," he told MN. "If you overprice the bus or the train you've got a load of empty seats but if you price it cost effectively you'll find that the train and bus is full and you can't get a ticket. If you give quality in the organisation and quality in the stages, [competitors would] get good value and a good day out and they'll come back again."

Regular competitor and Rally4Wales managing director Jamie Edwards, meanwhile wonders "if there'll be a nervousness" within communities that multi-venue rallies may visit, so believes it would be sensible to consider condensing rallies into one area.

"You could take a venue like Dyfnant for example where you could easily get 15 competitive miles of stage," Edwards told MN. "On that basis, you could almost certainly carve up sections of that stage and quite easily end up with a 35-mile event.

"I'd be very sad if multi-venue rallying were to disappear as it's very much part of the day for me that we go from place to place and I wouldn't want to lose that challenge but if the choice was there between we don't go rallying in the forests or we perhaps condense it into a more centralised area, I think most people would look at that and say that's a compromise that they would accept. We can't just assume everything is going to be the way it was before."

Photos: M-Sport, 5 Nations British Rallycross Championship, SMJ Photography, FIA ERC

UK forests have been quiet since March last year

Donnelly made his Supercar debut in 2019 and is now a rallycross champion with DS 3

DONNELLY TAKES BRITISH RX CHAMPION AT FIRST ATTEMPT AS FINALE IS CANCELLED

Mark Donnelly has been crowned the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy champion after the planned fourth and final round of the 2020 campaign was cancelled last week.

Series organisers had hoped to run an event at Lydden Hill on January 23, but due to tightened coronavirus restrictions, the event will no longer go ahead.

Having won the season-opener on August Bank Holiday Monday at Lydden in a straight fight against multiple champion Julian Godfrey, LD Motorsports Citroen DS3 racer Donnelly then took top British RX points in round two, also at Lydden, finishing behind World RX runners Liam Doran and Enzo Ide on track, who were not registered for points.

In the third, and ultimately final, round at the Kent circuit Donnelly retired from the final after contact, but remained two points ahead of 2007 title-winner Ollie O'Donovan in the standings with Godfrey third.

"I'm delighted, over the moon," said former rally driver Donnelly. "I think there was a bit of beginner's luck involved and I got lucky winning the first round. It would have been nice to have got to a few more circuits but full credit to 5 Nations and the marshals for making it happen. I'm delighted to have won the first championship I've done."

Paige Bellerby and Tom Ovenden claimed the Motorsport UK Supernational and Junior category titles respectively.

BRANDS LOSS SHOULDN'T AFFECT MNCRC

Motorsport News Circuit Rally Championship organisers fully intend to run a full eight-round championship this season despite the recent cancellation of next weekend's Brands Hatch Winter Stages.

The loss of Brands on January 16 elevates the Alan Healy Memorial Stages (Cadwell Park) to the second-round spot on January 31, one week before the Neil Howard Stages (Oulton Park) on February 6.

Brands is unlikely to be rescheduled as Chelmsford Motor Club also runs Tendring & Clacton Rally that will now require most of its resources, but MNCRC co-ordinator Darren Spann is still confident of rescuing a full season with plans already afoot for a new eighth event.

"Obviously now the second round will be Cadwell and everything's looking good for that and everything's looking good for Oulton Park on February 6 but what's going to happen in these four weeks, I can't predict," Spann told MN. "We've all just got to press on with the intention of running a rally and if we can't run it we'll look to reschedule it."

Just the Dukeries Rally has run this campaign so far

Others could follow in Creighton's European footsteps

ERC CHANCE COULD BE IN STORE FOR YOUNG IRISH DRIVERS

Motorsport Ireland Rally Academy co-ordinator Sean McHugh has told MN some of the Academy's Rally4 drivers could get a taste of the European Rally Championship this year.

Callum Devine and Josh McErlean tackled the ERC last year to differing degrees in Hyundai i20 R5s, while William Creighton contested an event in a Ford Fiesta Rally4.

McHugh said: "As there appears to be very little hope of either Irish or British rallying in the early part of the year, we might try and get some of our younger two-wheel-drive Academy members to sample some European events: drivers like Brian Brady, David Kelly and Derek Mackarel."

Devine and McErlean's Rally2 programmes are yet to be firmed up, but the Academy's third Rally2 pilot James Wilson is unlikely to be heading to Europe.

"James is very much into forestry and gravel rallies so I would say the day there is a gravel rally announced in the British Isles or in Ireland, he'll be there," McHugh added.

HISTORICS

DOWN THE PUB

TIM CHILD

Formula Junior newcomer
Age: 52 **Lives:** Oxford

Child: self-confessed Alfaholic

He is an Alfa fan

"I grew up always loving Italian cars and about 10 years ago I was at an auction and had a few pints of cider and there was a 1977 Alfa Spider for sale and I ended up putting my hand up and buying it. Supposedly it had been fully restored but when I got it back to Oxford there was a lot of filler. So I spent two or three years restoring that as a road car."

He raced Caterhams

"I then bought an Alfa 4C, which was a modern car. My favourite road car is my old Alfa Spider and that's my daily drive to work. At around the same time, I started Caterham racing and I've mainly done that. But I always had an eye on getting into historic racing and the obvious thing was to get into Alfa historic racing."

He wanted to race an Alfa

"For about a year I looked at buying a road Alfa and turning it into a race car but due to the cost I bought the 2000 GTV, which has been racing with the HSCC in 70s Road Sports since the 1990s. It came up for sale just before lockdown. I was very warmly welcomed into 70s Road Sports. I did Brands and Oulton but didn't finish either race. I think I was just unlucky. We had a bit of a fire at Brands Hatch but things went better at Cadwell Park and Silverstone towards the end of the season."

He's now added a Formula Junior

"I've now got the ex-Curt Lincoln Cooper T59 Formula Junior, previously raced by Chris Merrick, and had a first race in it at Castle Combe in early October. It was a very wet race but it went well and I was pleased to finish sixth overall."

Alfa Romeos are still a passion

"I sold the 4C, so I've now got the race car and the Spider. I love Italy, anyway, and it's my favourite holiday destination. I like the looks of the Alfas and the racing history. They are a bit different and there is a bit of an Alfa community."

Photos: Paul Lawrence

LVX942J will be back in action later this year

ROGER CLARK ESCORT TO TACKLE 2021 WITH R.A.C. RALLY TARGET

Famous Ford will be on entry list for November historic rallying epic

By Paul Lawrence

The famous Ford Escort Mk1 used by Roger Clark to win the 1972 RAC Rally will return to competition this year and an entry on November's Roger Albert Clark Rally is the target.

Ex-works Escort guru Dave Watkins is now joint owner of LVX 942J and has recently restored the car for competitive use and says that tackling the event that celebrates its former driver is his prime aim.

"I think it's brilliant! It would have been good to do it in 2022 as that's 50 years since Roger won the RAC Rally. I want to get it home to the finish," said Watkins. "I'm steady away and I don't want to put it in the trees. I've done 11 Roger Alberts and finished all of them with a best of ninth overall. It's an awesome event."

Watkins and the co-owner have had the car for three years since acquiring it from the estate of the late Roy Cathcart in Northern Ireland. Adrian Boyd bought it from Ford in 1973 and Cathcart owned it from early 1975, so Watkins is only the fourth owner.

Watkins has now restored it for competitive use with modern safety equipment and did a lot of the work through lockdown last spring. He had it running on the road in December.

The car is not thought to have been rallied competitively since the late 1970s, though it did run at the Goodwood Festival of Speed several times with Cathcart. Watkins is hoping to get a Goodwood invite in July and is also planning to take it to Germany for the Eifel Rally Festival in July.

Clark and Tony Mason ran 'LVX' as car number 4 on the 1972 RAC Rally and Watkins has taken it back to its Esso livery from that event. Clark's 1972 victory was very significant as he became the first British driver to win the event after it moved onto forest special stages. "It's a dream to own this car and I'm so pleased with the way it has come out," said Watkins.

The iconic Ford Escort Mk1 has a storied history in rallying

The history of LVX 942J

LVX 942J began its rally story as a works-entered twin-cam engined car for Joginder Singh on the 1971 Safari Rally.

It had an 1800cc BDA engine fitted for the 1972 Scottish Rally for Roger Clark and he won the British championship with it in 1972 and '73.

A new bodyshell was fitted for the 1972 RAC Rally and it went to a two-litre BDA engine in September 1972.

It had a new Ford Boreham bodyshell fitted after Adrian Boyd crashed on the 1973 RAC Rally. Cathcart kept LVX in Clark's 1973 Scottish Rally winning colours because that was the event when he first saw it. Cathcart used LVX through the 1970s before retiring it from active competition towards the end of the decade.

Paul Crosby and Andy Pullan (Porsche 911) were the final classic rally winners of 2020 when they won the HERO Per Ardua Ad Infinitum held at Bicester Heritage just before Christmas. Despite many COVID-related challenges, HERO successfully ran the one-day event to replace the cancelled Rally of the Tests and Le Jog.

IN BRIEF

James Young

The East Anglian rallying fraternity was shocked to learn of the death of James Young in an accident just before Christmas. Young was an accomplished co-driver to his brother David in a range of Ford Escorts and when not competing was often part of the service crew for Grant Shand's Rally Xtreme squad.

Tony Merrick

Tony Merrick, vice president of the Historic Grand Prix Cars Association, died in December after a short illness. He was a renowned race and restorer of historic racing cars over more than 40 years and set up his own restoration business in 1972. As a former chairman of the HGPCA, he raced until 1999 and was particularly known for driving an ERA R1A and, later, a Ferrari Dino.

HSCC gets Spa date

The Historic Sports Car Club will have two 30-minute Closed Wheel races during the prestigious Classic Six Hour meeting at Spa-Francorchamps (October 1-3). The double-header will be open to contenders from its Thundersports, Guards Trophy, Dunlop Saloon Car Cup, 70s Road Sports, Historic Touring Cars, Historic Road Sports and 80s Production categories.

Trial is cancelled

The annual Plum Pudding Historic Sporting Trial was a late victim of the extended Covid restrictions. Due to run on Monday December 28, the Hampshire event was cancelled as some of the key organisers and many competitors found themselves moved into Tier 4 lockdown regions in the run-up to Christmas.

Minis at Prescott

A new event for this season will be the Prescott Mini Festival on Saturday May 22. The Gloucestershire hillclimb venue will be turned over to a celebration of all things Mini related with support from The Sporting Minis. A range of Minis will compete on the hill amid demonstration runs and the event will include special guests from the story of the Mini in motorsport.

Sports and GT battles

Ecurie Classic Racing has unveiled its inaugural calendar for up to 2.7-litre pre '66 sports and GT cars. Forty-minute optional two-driver races will be run at Snetterton in April, Castle Combe in June, Oulton Park in July, Donington Park in September and there are two visits to Silverstone in May and August.

Generations game

Nine Frazer Nashes are among a 50-car field for the inaugural Generations Rally, to be run by the 'Rally the Globe' organisation in late March. Based in the Lake District from March 26-28, it is open to crews made up of two generations of a family, including fathers and sons, mothers and daughters-in-law and uncles and nephews. The route will take in a range of tests and regularity sections across the Lake District and Yorkshire Dales.

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FEATURE

Under new management: The Motorbase BTCC crew

A FRESH NAME ABOVE THE DOOR HERALDS A NEW ERA FOR MOTORBASE PERFORMANCE

Shaun Hollamby and Pete Osborne take the reins at British Touring Car Championship team for 2021 attack. By Matt James

AmDTuning ran a Motorbase Ford Focus back in 2014

Bartrum founded the squad

"I know what a great team this is"

Pete Osborne

Pete Osborne: new team owner

Shaun Hollamby's journey in the British Touring Car Championship started more than a decade ago when he joined the grid as a driver and team boss in a Volkswagen Golf. The machine wasn't the sharpest tool in the line up but the amiable driver gave it his all.

Fast forward 10 years, and Hollamby is on the cusp of his most exciting season in the top-flight to date. Businessman Pete Osborne, father of BTCC battler Sam, has acquired Motorbase Performance from David Bartrum and it is full steam ahead for 2021 with Hollamby slotting into the role as team principal.

Successful businessman Osborne, with a background in haulage and logistics, placed his son with MB Motorsport last season for Sam's second year at the top table. MB Motorsport, fronted by ex-Formula 1 driver Mark Blundell, had grown out of Hollamby's original AmDTuning.com squad and Hollamby himself oversaw the running of the two Honda Civic Type R FK2s.

But now there is a fresh challenge on the horizon. Osborne Sr, a former TVR Tuscan Challenge racer and Porsche entrant, had moved in the same paddocks as Motorbase's flamboyant team patron Bartrum. They had talked about placing Sam with the Kent team at the start of 2020 but it didn't quite come off. However, a dialogue was opened and it was galvanised when Hollamby too started talking to Motorbase about the future.

Motorbase has been a stalwart of the BTCC since 2006. The build of a new fourth-generation Ford Focus ST for 2020 was a labour of love for Bartrum and his crew, but it put the hatchback right at the sharp end. Indeed, driver Rory Butcher took eight podiums, with three wins, last term and he was one of those in with a title shout going into the season-closer at Brands Hatch back in November. The new hardware had proved its worth and it had turned heads in the BTCC paddock.

Hollamby explains: "We talked to David about running a Ford Focus in 2021, because we are looking to the future. All the new cars on the grid are now are a step forward. The Honda FK2s we ran last year with MB Motorsport were a good chassis – arguably the best on the grid – but we needed to make progress.

"So we were considering the Ford and the Focus is hybrid-ready, which is what we needed. Then once the conversation started, the topic came up with Pete Osborne about doing something more than just buying cars."

The escalated talks have led to Osborne buying Motorbase and Hollamby will take over the team's HQ and staff to operate four machines under the name. The team principal retains his relationship with MB Motorsport too, and details of that team's plans are due to be revealed within the next few weeks.

For Osborne, it marks a step into an arena he loves. He admits he was a latecomer to motorsport as his business was taking off, but now he knows it is a passion that he wants to turn into a commercial reality. As well as son Sam, youngest son Jamie has also embarked on a race career and daughter Charlotte and wife Melanie are also part of the crew that enjoy being part of the motorsport world.

Photos: Mike Hills Speed Images, Jakob Ebrey

Shaun Hollamby has high hopes for Motorbase

The AmD boss has been in the BTCC since 2010

Hollamby oversaw the MB attack in 2020

TRACK RECORD - MOTORBASE IN THE BTCC

We look back at the 15 seasons that Motorbase has already been part of the British Touring Car Championship and trace his history of success in the category.

2020
Car: Ford Focus
Drivers: Rory Butcher (3 wins), Ollie Jackson (2 wins), Andy Neate
Teams championship: 4th

2019
Car: Ford Focus
Drivers: Tom Chilton (1 win), Ollie Jackson, Nic Hamilton, Michael Caine
Teams championship: 7th

2018
Car: Ford Focus
Drivers: Tom Chilton (1 win), James Cole
Teams championship: 4th

2017
Car: Ford Focus
Drivers: Mat Jackson (1 win), Rory Butcher, Martin Depper, Luke Davenport
Teams' championship: 6th

2016
Car: Ford Focus
Drivers: Mat Jackson (5 wins), Andrew Jordan (2 wins)
Teams' championship: 3rd

2015 (part-season)
Car: Ford Focus
Drivers: Mat Jackson (4 wins), James Cole
Teams' championship: 7th

2014
Car: Ford Focus
Drivers: Mat Jackson (2 wins), Fabrizio Giovanardi, Jack Clarke
Teams' championship: 4th

Jackson: two wins

Jordan back in '16

First win in 2009

Debut: Pinkney

2013
Car: Ford Focus
Drivers: Mat Jackson, Michael Caine, Aron Smith, Tom Onslow-Cole
Teams' championship: 5th

2012
Car: Ford Focus ST
Drivers: Mat Jackson (3 wins), Liam Griffin, Aron Smith (1 win)
Teams' championship: 4th

2011
Car: Ford Focus ST
Drivers: Mat Jackson (4 wins), James Thompson, Michael Caine, Liam Griffin
Teams' championship: 5th

2010
Car: BMW 320si
Drivers: Mat Jackson (1 win), Steven Kane (1 win), Ben Collins
Teams' championship: 4th

2009
Car: BMW 320si
Drivers: Jonathan Adam, Rob Collard (2 wins)
Teams' championship: 4th

2008
Car: BMW 320si
Drivers: Steven Kane, Rob Collard
Teams' championship: 6th

2007
Car: Seat Toledo
Drivers: Paul O'Neill, Matt Allison, Tom Ferrier, Gareth Howell
Teams' championship: 8th

2006
Cars: Honda Integra Type R, Seat Toledo
Drivers: David Pinkney, Tom Ferrier
Teams' championship: 6th

Osborne says: "We go as a family when we go racing. I have always enjoyed the team side of things and I ran my own crew when I raced in Porsches [in 2006 and 2007] along with support from Redline. I have always kept an eye on Motorbase and admired it from afar, because Bartrum runs a great operation.

"I have run a logistics business and I have got an MD in there who looks after that for me. Motorsport is something else I really wanted to get involved with and Motorbase is a great option because it is a top-class outfit. I could have bought a couple of different businesses or I could have looked at a couple of different race teams. But when the Motorbase plan came up, I just knew it was right because we could just run it as the race team that it already is."

The know-how of Hollamby's AmDTuning experience will be allied to the knowledge and staff at Motorbase, which the team principal hopes can put his activities on a firm footing and continue the trajectory both he and Motorbase already has in the category. Hollamby says: "After we won the championship in 2019 [Butcher won the Independents Trophy with AmD and the crew won the Independents Teams' Trophy], my big ambition was to make the team commercially viable.

"That didn't mean that I want to rip everybody off and make loads of money out of it, but I wanted to get to the situation where the team is a proper business. Previously, we have run a car tuning business, and the race team was part of that set-up. By moving to Motorbase, that situation ends. It is a positive thing for the future. AmD Tuning still exists and carries on as it is in its performance tuning business guise, but the race team will be a business on its own operating from Motorbase, and that is an exciting change for me."

The Osborne-Hollamby alliance is only at the start of its journey and it has bought a team with race-winning and car-building potential. That is something that is highly important to both men and it means the pair has also future-proofed itself in the BTCC long term.

From the outside, though, there could be the suspicion that this is just a wealthy father buying a race team for his son to use. Both Hollamby and Osborne are aware of the stigma but say that the plan goes way beyond that.

"In most cases, when you can see a dad getting involved with a team – and this has even happened in Formula 1 – they are only in it so their son can go motor racing," says Hollamby. "That is a bit painful, but this is totally not that sort of situation: Pete and Sam are very logical about their whole approach. They realise this is a business, and it is about whatever works best for the business."

Osborne is more forthright and has told his offspring that he will have to bring his own ingredients to the party to make it work. "The business is the business and Motorbase will come first," says Osborne Sr. "This is not just dad paying for the privilege of his lad to go racing. I spoke to Sam and told him he has to bring his sponsorship in and add value to the drive and prove his worth, because it is business. We have been talking to all sorts of drivers."

It is no wonder that the drivers are knocking at the door after the potential that was shown by what was a brand new front-wheel-drive machine last term. Hollamby knows that the new project will put the pressure – and the weight of expectation – squarely on him.

"Motorbase is in a position for multiple race wins and a championship challenge," he says forthrightly. "That is where we want to be. It is the first time in 10 years of being in the BTCC that I can honestly say that we want to be challenging for the championship: and I am talking the overall championship. That is the big target and we have everything in place to make that happen: car, drivers, engine, commercial side, team. That doesn't mean we are going to do that, but it means that we don't have any excuses. There is nothing in the whole deal that tells me that we can't win the title – although there are probably five or six other teams who are going to say the same thing!

"I started out with a three-year plan back in 2010 – and I am still here," adds Hollamby. "We learned a huge amount – and I can't underestimate, in that time, how much we learned about how *not* to do touring cars – but you learn more from your mistakes than you do from your successes. People who know me well would know that I was thinking of stopping in the BTCC soon and putting myself through the stress, but this deal is about me working with the people I want to work with on a project that excites me. Getting to the point of being commercially viable is one thing but working with the people I want around me is another thing. I am really fired up for this new challenge."

The incoming Cosworth Electronic-derived hybrid future of the BTCC, which is due to complete its testing this season before its widespread introduction in 2022, is another key point. Teams with older cars are having to rethink their hardware amid the alterations that will be needed to make their cars up to date.

Osborne says that was part of the impetus to take the plunge for 2021. He says: "One of the main reasons I bought a team this year is because we are coming into a hybrid future for the BTCC. It will give us a good platform to be ready and as soon as we can get our hands on some kit, we will be out there testing. That is really exciting, and it is what all manufacturers have wanted for a while. Although the BTCC is already an excellent platform, it will be another step to be able to go in and sell a hybrid initiative."

Hollamby adds: "Some people might say 'is this the right time to be investing in this sort of thing?' I actually do think it is especially with hybrid coming. If you want to get bigger brands and manufacturers, it is what you have to have: you can't not have it."

As well as that tick in the box, Motorbase has proved that it has the potential to build completed new cars when required. That means it can construct chassis for customer teams as and when it is required, and it could even mount a totally fresh approach should plans snowball.

Hollamby says: "I was always very nervous about a car build. I supposed the only reason I would ever have built a brand-new car – having built the Golf all those years ago, I know how much hard work it is – was if we had a manufacturer who wanted to pay to have that done. It is a big risk building a new car because you could end up with a dud. It would be a lot of money to spend just for an ego trip. But with Motorbase, we know that the Focus is a good car. [So this deal] is a bit of a reverse-engineering process of building our own cars."

The foundations laid down by Motorbase with its race-winning machines, infrastructure and abilities are now under new stewardship with a highly ambitious partnership. Rather than being the end of the Motorbase story, this is, perhaps, just the beginning. ■

Pete Osborne has enjoyed his racing as part of a family adventure

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FEATURE

JENSON BUTTON

THE WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP IS WITH YOU FOREVER

The Formula 1 superstar tackles MN readers' questions and tells Graham Keilloh about his greatest triumphs and what's next

Button has no regrets from his F1 career

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images

Button at first was just glad to be racing in '09

Motorsport News never wishes to blow its own trumpet, but readers' Q&A guests surely don't get much bigger than this. None other than Formula 1 star Jenson Button took time out of his busy schedule to answer MN readers' many queries. And Button's schedule indeed remains busy even in F1 retirement, with a growing family, his own Jenson Team Rocket RJN GT team and plenty of his own, eclectic, activity behind the wheel.

He tells us about his and the Brawn team's extraordinary phoenix-from-the-flames championships in 2009, *that* Canadian Grand Prix in 2011 plus much more besides, such as how he narrowly missed out on Ferrari and IndyCar drives, what he thinks of Lewis Hamilton and Michael Schumacher as well as his developing love for off-roading.

So let's get right down to it, starting with his crowning glory.

Question: When you first sat in the Brawn, did you have any inkling as to what you would achieve?
Jimmy N
Via Twitter
Jenson Button: "No, at that moment we were just happy to be going racing. We drove around the Stowe circuit at Silverstone, and up until that day we didn't think we'd be racing in F1. When the car fired up, we had a tiny little tent like a go-kart tent that we were running the car out of, and cheers went up when the engine started and I pulled out.

"The great thing was with that little shakedown we didn't have any issues, no overheating, you normally have a couple of little things that you need to resolve. [It was] great considering we had this engine in the back of the car that we hadn't ever used before, the Mercedes engine, and it was bolted to a chassis that was made for a Honda engine so it had a spacer in there to make it fit. Even with that the car felt together. But we didn't know what we would go on to achieve, no."

Motorsport News: When did it first start occurring to you?
JB: "The first test we went to Barcelona, it was the last test of the season, everyone else had been testing. I remember coming in and my engineer Andrew Shovlin, who is chief engineer now at Mercedes, just smiled at me. I said 'oi, what you smiling at?' He said 'how was it?' I said 'it feels alright, it was a bit too much oversteer here, bit too much understeer here', and he went 'well you're seven tenths quicker than anyone!'

"So we made some changes, we put a bit of fuel in it and we went out and I think we ended up half a second quicker then everyone even though we're running higher fuel. But we still didn't go into it thinking 'we're going to be world champions this year', there was still a lot to do and a lot to understand about the car. Also as a team we hadn't done any pitstops, we hadn't done any long runs, no high fuel runs, we didn't know how much fuel she would use, the mapping or anything. There was still a lot to learn."

Question: What was it like going from the midfield to the top?
dynamite
Via Twitter
MN: I assume they mean with Brawn?
JB: "We had been near the front before. In 2004, as BAR Honda, we were always in the mix and I led quite a few races until the Ferraris turned up the engine and drove past us, and finished second in the constructors. And then 2006 we had our first win, outscored Fernando [Alonso] and Michael [Schumacher] over the last third of the season.

"But 2007, 2008 were tough years for the team. And 2009 took us properly back to the front, so it felt pretty normal, and the team they'd been under pressure before so it wasn't anything different for them.

"For me in the latter part of the season I definitely felt the pressure. I'd never led a world championship before, and when you're with a team that doesn't have funding for the future you're a little a bit worried because this could be your only opportunity to get that title so I definitely put a lot of pressure on my shoulders, probably a bit too much. If I did it again I'd be a little bit more relaxed."

MN: Are there things you could have done differently?
JB: "This was an exciting team of people with a great car, but I knew that we didn't have the money to develop the car. So as soon as we got halfway through the season and we weren't winning it was really

Button feels the relief after clinching his 2009 F1 title in Brazil

really tough. Every time you made a tiny mistake it ended up being massive because you couldn't mess up with Red Bull, they were so competitive from the mid-season onwards. So I definitely put too much pressure on my shoulders to try and win every race and we weren't anywhere near winning most races.

"You can't change the past so it was what it was. And I learnt a lot from those tough races and Brazil when I clinched the title all of those tough races were going on my mind and I was able to get over it by speaking to people around me, family, friends, physio, PR man, my manager, all best buddies of mine.

"I remember Brazil Saturday night after qualifying just thinking 'it's going to happen tomorrow, I'm going to win the world championship' sat in a bar over a beer! Because I had to get it done then. [That was] because I didn't want to take it to the last race, again added pressure, and I knew my mistakes over the last few races and I understood how to put it right."

Question: What is the biggest change from being a grand prix winner to a world champion?
Liam Waldie
Via Twitter
JB: "Yeah, two very different things. Winning a race is pretty special because it's high adrenaline, it's living in the moment, there's so much emotion in that moment in time. So the highest excitement definitely comes from a race win.

"Winning the world championship, initially it's a relief, 'wow I've done it, I've achieved my goal'. And for me the world

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FEATURE

Button was astonished in 2009 testing to be 0.7s quicker than rest

Button reckons Michael Schumacher (l) and Lewis Hamilton (c) each have their own strengths

Button relished his battles with Hamilton

Button was all set for a move to Ferrari early in the 2010s decade

championship, that's with you forever. You wake up in the morning and you're like 'oh, I'm a world champion!' That never goes away. When you're having a difficult day in your racing career you're like 'but I'm world champion and no-one can take that away from me'. It gives you a lot of confidence knowing that you've been through all the emotions of fighting for a world championship."

Question: How hard was the 2011 Canadian Grand Prix to drive and did you ever think to just give up and retire the car?
Kieran
Via Twitter
JB: "It's one of those races that shows you should just never give up. I started seventh. [Lewis Hamilton] got in front of me, he made a mistake, I got back past him. We had the incident on the straight, put him in the wall and I thought it had damaged my rear end as well because when we touched I had a big amount of oversteer which almost put me in the wall as well, I was like 'oh no, game over'. But the car felt OK.

"It's a horrible feeling because you never want to crash with your team-mate, you never want to crash with anyone but especially your team-mate. When it was red flagged, I went straight into his room and said 'mate I'm sorry but I really didn't know you were there', he said 'no I totally get it'.

"And then I could relax and focus on getting back in the car and moving forward, and then I ended up crashing with Fernando as well! And I broke my front wing, got a puncture, had a drivethrough penalty, and lots of pitstops, six in total.

"But I knew I had a good car under me and I love those conditions. So every lap was flat out, pushing, trying to find more grip than other people, trying to keep heat in the brakes because that was a big thing, that's why I had a much bigger speed advantage because we were able to keep the brakes a lot hotter and it kept the tyres warner.

"So I just kept fighting through and then the last safety car I was in fourth, and I could see the lead. At that point I was like 'right we're going to go for this, we can do this'. But it was tricky because there was a dry line and everything else was wet so it made it difficult to overtake. But it was a race that I never gave up because I knew that if we were in the right position we could challenge for a good finish. When I was last half a lap behind no I didn't think we'd win, but I still thought we could be competitive.

"People weren't really looking at what I was doing because I was so far back most of the time, and deciding when to put a tyre on people weren't really paying attention so we could really get a good margin on them."

Question: Since you have raced against both, who do you think is the best: Lewis or Michael?
Richard
Via Twitter
JB: "Who knows? Very different drivers, very different styles of driving. I've got a lot of respect for both. For me for natural ability over one lap you'd probably say Lewis, but Michael put everything into his racing. And he worked on every area to be better than the rest; fitness, nutrition, all the reaction work he did and the time he spent with the team and development. You look at it and say 'well he had the best car', but he spent so many days with that team testing and developing that car around him. He also had a great team-mate in Rubens [Barrichello]. I know Rubens is one of the best guys at setting up a race car because I had him as a team-mate when we were at Brawn.

Button never gave up in Canada 2011

"Both are great drivers. You can criticise [Schumacher] for some things he's done on track but he was the guy that you looked up to in terms of he got everything out of the package he had and he worked so, so hard. So he was a hero growing up whereas obviously Lewis wasn't because he was younger than me!

"I had some great races with both. Lewis as team-mates we had some great battles especially in mixed conditions. And Lewis was so fair with his driving, that's one thing that stands out with Lewis; Michael probably not so much in races that he's fighting for the world championship but every encounter I had with Michael was good racing wise. But I have to say with Lewis he's the most fair driver out there."

MN: How does Lewis now compare to Lewis you were team-mates with?

JB: "Off track he's very different! He was very young [then] and he's got a lot more going on off track now. On track he's still the same Lewis but he's learnt a lot. He's had some pretty competitive team-mates to work with, especially Nico [Rosberg], Nico spent years with Michael before that. So [he's had] experienced team-mates but also team-mates that are quite calculated in the way that they go racing and try and get one over on their team-mate.

"So he's more of a complete driver now. When we were team-mates he was very quick but probably looking after tyres, saving fuel, was not one of his strengths. Now he's in a position where he's able to lead from the front and then he can do what he wants! He can save fuel, he can look after tyres, it's always a lot easier in that position but he's taking advantage of it and he's going to be the most successful racing driver in F1 history next year."

Question: Given Mercedes' later dominance, do you rue moving to McLaren rather than staying in Brackley?

Martin Smith
Via Twitter

JB: "No, for that moment in my career it was the right call. Nobody would think that Mercedes would achieve what they have. Moving to a team that had real history in the sport was definitely the right move and in 2010, 2011, 2012 [we had] three fantastic years of fighting at the front. We didn't win the championship but [were] reasonably close and I won eight races, Lewis won 10.

"It was a good car, great team to work with, it was a lot of fun racing alongside

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Button took eight wins in his first three years with McLaren and loved his time with the team

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FEATURE

Button in British GT, but his racing plans are elsewhere

Lewis as well which is one of the major reasons for wanting to go to McLaren. It was all about challenging myself and new challenges after winning the world championship.

"Mercedes had a couple of tough years, 2010, 2011, and I think that's when Mercedes said this is not good enough for us, they're not looking good as a manufacturer and they started pumping in a lot of cash and employing whoever they needed to win. But that was a couple of years into Mercedes owning the Brackley-based team."

Question: If you could make one change to your career you had in F1 what would it be and why?
Adam Stokes
Via Facebook
JB: "I wouldn't. It is what it is. We'd all love to win more world championships, win more races, but you take what you're given and you work with it and I'm pretty happy with my career, winning a world championship was always the aim. Some of my race wins have filled me with a lot of joy, and racing head to head with people like Michael Schumacher and Mika Hakkinen and Fernando, Kimi Raikkonen, Lewis Hamilton, all these great drivers, I was very lucky to find myself in that situation.

"And to race in Formula 1, that's just madness. I raced in Formula 1 for 17 years. As a kid growing up you look at F1 drivers and you think they're superhuman, they're not – maybe Romain Grosjean is! You never expect to actually be one of them one day so to actually hang around for 17 years is pretty awesome."

Question: Which team have you not driven for that you wished you did (assuming no restrictions)?
Agilis GP
Via Twitter
JB: "There's the obvious, every driver would love to race for Ferrari at some point. There's just something about that team, even this year [2020] it's tough for them and tough for motorsport fans to see them where they are, but maybe they needed this to come back stronger.

"But I would love to have raced for Ferrari and there was a good possibility sort of eight years ago but it just didn't materialise at the end. Pretty much contracts were ready to go and it almost happened but for many different reasons it didn't and to be fair I was probably better off where I was anyway at McLaren."
MN: It would have presumably been alongside Alonso at Ferrari?
JB: [Laughs] Possibly.

MN sets the scene: Button with friend Chris Buncombe co-owns the Jenson Team Rocket RJN team. It competed in the British GT championship this year with James Baldwin and Michael O'Brien driving a McLaren 720S, and they won on debut at Oulton Park. In Silverstone's season finale Button and Buncombe raced a second McLaren for the team.
Question: Is Jenson planning a full season in the British GT series next year? And will James Baldwin be continuing in the team too? (It's a line-up I badly want to see)
Ian w
Via Twitter
JB: "Well I won't be racing in British GT next season, because I'm going to be pretty busy. First of all I've got a second child due [born Dec 27]. But I've also got other things that I'm working on, nothing is quite finalised yet but very close.

"I'm doing my Sky punditry as well and there's a possibility of me racing in something next year but it won't be British GT I'm sorry to say. I would always love to do a one-off race like I did this year and the aim for the team is more towards Europe as well, two possibilities there, one of them I can't mention at this moment [this was before Jenson Team Rocket RJN confirmed its 2021 DTM entry]. The other one is to race in GT World Challenge Europe with a two-car line-up. That was the aim last year but with Covid it didn't happen.

"We'd love to have James in the car. He's a super talent, really nice guy with it, very down to earth. The great thing about him is he's willing to learn, his ears are open, listening to everything he possibly can, taking it on board. I hope he gets the opportunity to race next year, we need to fund it somehow so we need a little bit of help there!

"To have James on board would be pretty good, he deserves to be racing in something good. He's shocked us with his talent after one year of racing, or no years of racing when he won his first race in British GT, so we really hope to continue with him. The aim for Jenson Team Rocket RJN is to hopefully race at Le Mans one day and if that is the case I would love to also race with our team."

Question: Are you thinking of participating in Super GT with Rocket?
Emi
Via Twitter
JB: "Super GT is very different. You have Honda, Nissan and Toyota, they have four or five teams each, smaller teams that run the cars, but they [manufacturers] give them the car, they're given the engines by a manufacturer to run them. That's not an aim for us, it's not an area that we know and it would be a little tricky with the language barrier.

"I loved my time in Super GT, and to win the championship in our first year was pretty awesome with Team Kunimitsu Raybrig. And my team-mate that I won the championship with in 2018 just won it again, Naoki Yamamoto. And on the last corner of the last race the KeePer Toyota driven by [Nick] Cassidy for most of the year and [Ryo] Hirakawa ran out of fuel! So Naoki overtook and won the race and won the championship. There's so much action in Super GT, I tried to help that [recognition] as much as possible because it's such a fantastic category."

Question: If Toto [Wolff, Mercedes boss] had rang you at 0200hrs, instead of George Russell, would you have answered the call?
Ken Quinn
Via Twitter
JB: "[Laughs] Yeah definitely. I'm not sure I'd be race fit, so they made the right call there. George proved first that the car is very good. You've gone from qualifying 18th to qualifying second so it proves that the Mercedes car is above and beyond anything in F1 and to be able to jump in, it's obviously a reasonably easy car to drive.

"But he's also shown he doesn't make mistakes, he jumped in it, cool, calculated. I'm sure he was upset at not getting pole position over his team-mate [Valtteri Bottas] that's been there for three years! But he just drove away from him in the race, and didn't make a mistake, staggering.

"Everyone knows that he is talented and we need to praise Williams for giving him the opportunity, you want to see that and fair play to them, a lot of praise for them."
MN: Is George someone you've had contact with before?
JB: "Yeah I spoke to him before he was announced wishing him luck and hoping that he got the seat for that race. I've known George for a few years. We actually did an event in Barbados together couple of years back, just before he got in F1, both karting together and driving Radicals and things, it was quite good fun.

"I just loved that he got to grips with that car [in Bahrain] so quickly. I'm not going to take anything away from Lewis because he is a seven-time world champion and he totally deserves it, but lovely to see someone like George jump in that car and he should have won the race. I think a lot of viewers turned on as well to watch that, he's got a big fanbase now. He's back at Williams with a lot more experience and hopefully over the winter we will see progress from them and he can be a big part of that.

"I was a bit surprised [about] his competitiveness compared to Valtteri in the race and I'm sure Valtteri's questioning himself after that. But we always knew George was good. For Toto to say 'a star is born', well no he was awesome at Williams and you can see that, he's not been outqualified by his team-mate at Williams and some of his moves in the race and how competitive he is, he's shown it for the last two years if you've been there taking notice."

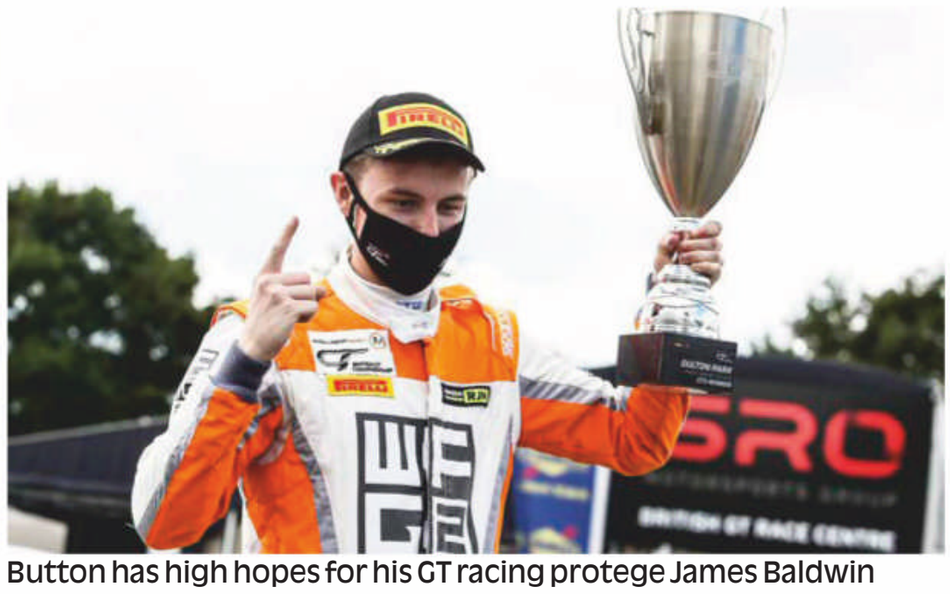
Question: Are there any particular series you have an interest in entering in the future?
Joel
Via Twitter
Question: What's your next on-track challenge? Are you going to give the Le Mans 24 Hours another shot?
CC
Via Twitter
Question: Would you ever try IndyCar like Fernando Alonso did?
Courtney Lee
Via Twitter
Question: Would you ever give the BTCC a go?
Harry Adams
Via Twitter
JB: "BTCC is awesome to watch, [I'm a] big fan. But it's so different. It's front-wheel drive, most of the cars, it would be very alien to me. Super GT was a big enough change and that has a lot of downforce. And it's also in the UK where I don't live so it's not easy for time with the family!

"Le Mans yeah, that's the aim to go back. I basically did my year at Le Mans for practice for when the new regs happened and I could jump in hopefully a competitive car that could challenge for a win.

"I love off-roading as well. I've been doing a few races in the States off-roading so I could see myself doing rallycross or rallying or something else. And the great thing is now I'm going racing because

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, Motorsport Images

Button took the Super GT title with Naoki Yamamoto



Button has high hopes for his GT racing protege James Baldwin

Button wants to fight for Le Mans victory under the new rules

I just love it. I was never just a Formula 1 driver, I was a racing driver. I love driving anything, I love cars, I love pushing them to the limit.

"It's a real buzz and that's never going to go away. I'm not going to be one of those drivers that just stops after F1, I want to put my foot in the door of everything and then see if I'm any good at it. Off-roading I've realised I'm really not very good at it yet, it's taken a long time to get kind of competitive. It's because it's just so alien, it's more like a powerboat on a rough sea. So you've got to take your brain out and just believe the vehicle will do what it's capable of, and it's pretty insane what they can do over these massive bumps and jumps."

MN: IndyCar, Indy 500, is that something you've considered?

JB: "There was a possibility of me racing next year [2021] in IndyCar, it just didn't come about because of Covid. I was supposed to do a couple of tests with McLaren. First one I couldn't do because of Covid, it was cancelled, and the second one was between the two Austrian GPs and I said 'yeah I'm sure I can come back with all the tests and everything'.

"Then Indy said 'oh no, we don't want you coming from Europe to do the test now, it's too close'. So I missed out on doing that which is a shame because my aim was to do the road circuits, not ovals, I wouldn't do ovals but to do all the road courses, but it just didn't happen."

MN: Sounds like it was something that was quite close to happening?

JB: "If Covid didn't happen it probably would but I'm sure that a lot of people can say the same thing!"

Question: What would you advise anyone to get the most out of karting?
Auto Tradition
Via Twitter

JB: "Wow that's a really good question! Enjoy yourself. So many kids or families, parents, go into karting thinking their kid's going to be the next Lewis Hamilton and you're so far away from that. So it should be about enjoying it. It's great bonding with family and kids. And a lot of kids are very competitive so they love the competitiveness of racing and [being] stood on the top of a podium. But you should be out there to have fun and you're going to learn so much more if you're not putting pressure on your shoulders to succeed.

"Some kids say 'I'm going to be the next F1 driver', and don't know what they mean when they say that. When I was 11 I haven't got a clue what F1 is or what it takes, I'm living in the moment and that's exactly what kids should do, enjoy themselves and go out and try and win and then mess around with the kids after playing football or something.

"Now there there's a lot of money being thrown at karting because people are grooming kids to be the next F1 world champion. For me it was just out there having fun with my dad on the weekends. It was such a good group of people I was racing with, Dan Wheldon, Justin Wilson, Anthony Davidson just to name a few, so many talented drivers but we were out there just having fun.

"When you get a bit older and I was 15 racing in the world championship that's when it gets a bit more serious, like 'hang on a second, if I do well here something great could happen'. But the first five or six years was just go out there and have fun."

Question: Have you ever been mistaken for someone else?
Mike Stokoe
Via Twitter

JB: "[Laughs] They must know that I have! Because that's such a good question.

"I was at Heathrow Airport, must have been seven, eight years ago now in the lounge and a lady came up to me and said 'oh, it's you isn't it?' And I'm like OK, what do I say here? 'Yes', and she said 'oh my whole family we're big fans of yours', and she was American and I'm like wow I didn't know there were that many American fans of F1 so, 'well, thank you very much'. [She] said 'yeah everyone, my kids, grandkids, even my parents', I'm like wow OK that's a big family tree if they're still alive, 'that's fantastic thank you!' She went 'yeah we've got all of your albums!'

"'Ah, OK you think I'm Chris Martin', she said 'are you not Chris Martin? What do you do?' I said 'I'm a racing car driver, I race in Formula 1', she said 'what's your name?' I said 'Jenson', she said 'oh we're big fans of yours too!' And I was like oh this is hilarious!

"And a couple of years later I was flying from London to LA, and I get on the flight and get a tap on my shoulder and it's Chris Martin. And he goes 'Jenson!', I'd never met him before. He said 'did you know that I get people thinking I'm Jenson Button?' I was like 'are you kidding me! I had this a couple of years ago…'

"It was really cool, we spent a couple of hours talking, just thought it was hilarious. And then a month later I saw him on another flight going the other way from LA to London, and I met him in the lounge so we ended up having dinner together, and it's just funny two lookalikes sat there."

MN sets the scene: Shortly before the interview Button posted a social media message asking for information about an undernourished Great Dane he found in Los Angeles.

Question: Please ask Jenson Button if he has any news on the lost, scared Great Dane he found?
Kate Dobson
Via Twitter

JB: "Oh that's lovely that they've mentioned that! We've got a lovely lady called Melinda who takes our dogs off-lead hiking which is amazing, they're with like six other dogs. And she's taken the big Great Dane in, and she's feeding her up. We're like 'you're not going to give her away are you?' [Melinda said] 'Um, no I think she's going to be a new member of the family', which is great.

"She's still massively underweight but she's getting there, so thank you for asking how she's doing. She was found running on a road in LA, been running for two miles, she had no chip or anything. She's a very rare colour for a Great Dane and they think that she's had babies for a litter so people could make money off it and then she's just been dumped. Very sad but she's in a great place now." ■

Jenson Button remains very busy, including with regular appearances as a pundit on Sky's F1 coverage

Advertising enquiries: 01233 228753

FEATURE

TIME TO LOOK AHEAD TO '21

It's got to be better than last year, hasn't it? Well, let's hope so. Our staff look ahead to what's going to be embraced in 2021

It is unlikely that a season has been anticipated as much as 2021 since Motorsport News began publishing back in 1955. Sure, there are still some uncertainties right now, but the hunger for proper motorsport has never been stronger and the appetite for competition has never been more keenly felt.

It is the same for the Motorsport News staff too. We've been lucky enough to attend some events over the last 12 months, and it has been an eye-opener to realise just what atmosphere fans add to the meetings we've been at. Even the competitors seem to be missing the thrill of entertaining a crowd. It is about performing at their best and doing it in front of an appreciative audience.

As mentioned, we don't know what the start of the 2021 campaign will look like yet, but that hasn't stopped us looking ahead and pondering just what unfold on the stages and on the tracks in the year ahead.

Whatever the situation, MN will try its best to keep you across all the action in 2021, whether it has to wear a facemask or not.

MN has asked columnist-at-large David Addison, reporter Luke Barry, editor Matt James, deputy editor Graham Keilloh, historics ace Paul Lawrence, WRC guru Graham Lister and rallycross specialist Hal Ridge to tell us what delights that await.

The BTCC line-up will look very different in 2021

It's all change in the British Touring Car Championship

There was a collective sigh of relief – most audible from the organisers' HQ – when the final chequered flag fell at the end of the 2020 British Touring Car Championship season. It had been a bunfight to rearrange the calendar during the first lockdown, and the races were squeezed in just before the second. It mattered not, though, as the BTCC had been declared an elite sport and was able to carry on.

It is a shame that fans were not there to see Ash Sutton clinch his second title at Brands Hatch in November, but it was the culmination of a contest that was taken just as seriously by the 35 drivers who started races in 2020. And, now that one is in the book, eyes are already cast forward to Brands Hatch on April 3-4 when the field will be unleashed once more.

The movements going on in the background, the driver swaps, the team changes and the operational tweaks, have come thick and fast over the Christmas period and they show no signs of slowing down.

The precise make-up of the grid might not yet be fully settled, but Sutton, Colin Turkington. Dan Cammish, Rory Butcher and Tom Ingram will go toe-to-toe again. To spice things up even further, the line-up is likely to have Jason Plato back into the mix again too. There are eight titles between the drivers named there, and all six are worthy winners of any crown that comes their way.

Beyond that, there are some intriguing new partnerships that are still under wraps as Motorsport News closed for press. The news pages of MN are likely to be chock-a-block with some surprises between now and the middle of March.

While the teams and drivers might be getting familiar with new environments, set-ups and handling characteristics, there is one constant: the hard-fought on-track action. Nothing ever slows down in the BTCC, and that's what makes it such a hit.

Matt James
Editor

Elfyn Evans is heading into his prime in 2021 with a Toyota campaign

Meeke to shine a light on his talent with a fresh focus

Impartiality was a big part of my training, but I'm not afraid to say I'm a Kris Meeke fan, always have been, always will be [*you're fired – editor*]. Even though his deal to drive for PH Sport on the Dakar this month is a one-off for now, the fact he's competing at all after a year of inactivity suits me just fine. As I wrote in MN last month, when it came to driving a World Rally Car, Meeke was all about speed, all about wearing his heart firmly latched to his sleeve, all about throwing caution to the wind. He spoke his mind, gave his all and epitomised the man who helped to make it all possible, his one-time mentor Colin McRae.

That's all good as far as I'm concerned and here's hoping more opportunities in cross-country rallying come Meeke's way.

While Meeke's WRC career appears to be at an end, he's 41 after all, Elfyn Evans heads into 2021 in his prime. He was mighty during his bid to win last season's title. And with the experience of a championship challenge under his belt, the Welshman is well equipped to finish the year on top. Certainly, new Toyota team boss Jari-Matti Latvala believes he has what it takes to go for gold again.

The threat of Covid-19 and its potentially nastier variant continue to hang over the WRC calendar. Sweden has already been axed but a shortened Monte remains on, and the dream of a Rally Northern Ireland hasn't died, although funding during the worsening pandemic is key.

After getting two WRC starts in 2020, Craig Breen should get six opportunities to prove to Hyundai Motorsport head Andrea Adamo that he's worth of a full programme. Although his exact schedule is unclear, if Estonia and Finland are part of the plan then do not discount a breakthrough victory for the Irishman.

Despite Breen's increased Hyundai commitments, a second European Rally Championship programme with Team MRF Tyres hasn't been ruled out and it will be great to see him back in the ERC along with Callum Devine and, hopefully, Josh McErlean.

Graham Lister
WRC correspondent

Photos: Jakob Ebrey, mcklein-imagedatabase.com, Paul Lawrence, Motorsport Network

A return to the true atmosphere of the British Grand Prix

There is nothing quite like it. Drive in as dawn breaks and there are queues of people already at the gates. Those early Sunday morning hours when gradually the grandstands fill up and the colour slowly intensifies, like an artist lazily painting a canvas. And that tension as the start of the British Grand Prix looms.

A grand prix, especially at Silverstone, without a crowd – a huge, partisan and enthusiastic crowd – is just not the same.

That a circuit that seems constantly to be fighting to keep one grand prix should have run two in 2020's weirdest of years only added to the weirdness of the whole year, and Silverstone and Liberty are to be commended for finding a way of keeping both sides happy and to run two important points-scoring races, but neither side wanted to play to an empty gallery.

For 2021, Silverstone wants – needs – fans back in their tens of thousands and so does everyone to give the race that special atmosphere. Those Lewis Hamilton crowd-surfing moments, the ability to walk on to the track and head for the podium, that post-race concert:

The grand prix grandstands desperately missed fans

all part of what makes a Silverstone Grand Prix weekend so special. Yes, I know you can watch it on television but it just doesn't have the same buzz that being there can provide.

We have proved this year that racing can take place without fans and indeed club racing has been doing so for decades, but a grand prix isn't just a race meeting. It is An Event and, like a major opera, concert or West End show, it needs a crowd. So you can bet your bottom dollar that Silverstone will be working as hard as possible to make sure that numbers are allowed back in for 2021. Quite right. Preferably without face masks as well…

Oh, and on the subject of looking forward to things in 2021, can I add to our list a proper race day programme? Parsimonious clubs and venues may have tried to convince us that a digital version is all Covid-friendly, but nah… can we have the real deal in 2021 please?

David Addison
Columnist-at-large

Plenty to look forward to in Britain's long haul

When 2020's British GT season kicked off the championship's bosses were no doubt grateful. In that familiar tale, Covid had hit grid numbers, but there was a boost of six GT3 pairings competing in its Silver Cup. That is where both drivers are Silver graded, rather than the more standard Pro-Am including a Bronze-graded Amateur.

A refreshed class line-up for British GT

But there were unintended consequences, as Silver pairings also dominated the title fight. So the audacious call came: in 2021 GT3 Silver Cup pairings were no more. It left a few competitors high and dry, but one could see the logic. Amateur drivers are the category's lifeblood, and it seems reasonable they get a fighting competitive chance to go with their buck.

And as things stand the audacious call is doing the trick: 2021's Pro-Am battle is boiling up nicely. The brilliant Phil Keen, still seeking his first championship, moves to WPI Motorsport after a glittering Barwell spell. He more than most will benefit from the level playing field.

But to clinch his long-sought title there's the matter of beating the reigning champion, and former team-mate, Sandy Mitchell, who now pairs with Keen's ex-partner Adam Balon. Mitchell, just 20 years old, was a revelation last season. There was rarely much between him and Keen in their Barwell Lamborghinis, and that was with Mitchell's extra weight as a Silver Cup competitor.

Plus British GT's GOAT returns, as four-time champion Jonny Adam rekindles his formidable title-winning partnership with Andrew Howard in a Beechdean Aston Martin. Howard indeed said the class changes were key for his comeback. No doubt others will join them too before we kick off at Oulton Park in April.

And in Cheshire the supporting BRDC British Formula 3 contest will also be worthy of attention. The famous Arden squad has brought the series' number of teams to 10, and 15-year-old Zak O'Sullivan, a breakout star in his British Formula 4 single-seater debut campaign last year, will compete with Carlin. Hopefully his F4 rival Fortec's Luke Browning will join him. For Browning it's the usual story, wherein – unfortunately for him – talent is not the determinant of opportunities, rather budget is.

Graham Kellioh
Deputy editor

Why the forests need to come alive again

A forest and a rally car: Let's hope for more of this in '21

All of this waiting around has become quite boring for UK rally fans. Some single-venue events have been able to go ahead lately, but the absence of all the big rallies and the major championships we've grown accustomed to over the years has been felt, and felt hard.

Eleven months have now passed since a British Rally Championship round was held, 10 without a BTRDA rally; at this point, we'll take whatever we can get.

Mercifully, rallying's bigwigs are doing all they can to ensure we get a season across the line this time in 2021. Its complexion remains a little unclear with the moving goalposts posed by Covid, but there's positivity that by mid-late spring, we will be back underway in the forests and on the closed-public lanes.

We are out of practice of speculating what might happen out on the stages – instead wondering if cars will hit the stages at all – but the 2021 season is shaping up to be one of great intrigue, and not just because it could seal rallying's long-awaited return.

The British Rally Championship calendar in particular looks enthralling with a fantastic geographical spread of events on both Tarmac and gravel sure to create a stellar season. Let's hope the main players can find the necessary funding to formulate a thrilling battle which we were set to have but were robbed of last year.

While the BRC organisers have opted for a policy of change (just two events remain from the 2020 schedule), other series bosses have played it safer. There have been minimal shifts in the BTRDA calendar – with just the addition of the Kielder Stages and the Scottish Rally falling to reserve event as the Plains returns – while the initial Scottish and Asphalt schedules were unchanged.

And the ever-growing number of closed-road rallies is set to bulge too with the Hertfordshire Stages and Coast2Coast Rally just two examples of new events cropping up.

But let's not get too carried away. Talk can be cheap and coronavirus cases can seemingly spike in an instant so there are absolutely no guarantees. All of MN's fingers and toes remain crossed…

Luke Barry
Reporter

Continued on page 22

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FEATURE

Dusting off the bobble hat and the Thermos again

Flat chat and sideways: the prefect rallying pose...

Covid-19 has changed many things for many people, in some cases forever. I sincerely hope that the absence of forest rallying is a temporary matter, though it will likely have been gone for at least 14 months before it returns.

Aside from two worthy trial events, rightly closed off to most, forest rallying has suffered more from the pandemic than any other branch of UK motorsport. We've managed some classic road rallies and one or two single-venue events in the second half of 2020 but the forests have remained silent.

There is something wonderful about rally cars in the British forests. The chatter, banter and laughter of the spectators and marshals before someone with keen hearing picks up the first hint of a car approaching. The chatter subsides and everyone strains to listen, for the noise is a massive part of the whole experience.

We've probably been up since stupid o'clock and trudged far into a remote forest where it is often cold and wet. But the urgent sound of a fast-approaching rally car makes it all worthwhile. The spectacle of any car, new or old, driven well on gravel, is a joy to behold and the cold and the wet is quickly forgotten.

It might by a stunning modern R5 or World Rally Car, or a high-revving 1600cc or, best of all for me, a hard-working BDG. The sound of a BDG pulling 9500rpm through the trees is an utterly glorious sound and if Matthew Robinson is first on the road, that'll be nearer 10,000rpm. "No-one likes a short-shifter," he once told me with a customary grin.

My love of forest rallying goes back to the early days of special stages in the woods and I've loved it from Kershope to Staindale and from Clocaenog to Brechfa. The classic Mid-Wales stages of Hafren, Gatheiniog and Dyfnant are particular favourites and they have been sorely missed in the Covid era.

When we walked out of the Crafnant stage of the Cambrian Rally in early February, just as Storm Ciara was limbering up, little did we suspect that our next visit to a forest for a rally would be more than a year away. I can't wait to get back.

Paul Lawrence
Historics editor

Keeping the anticipation fully charged for 2021

Kouvola in Finland stepped into the World RX breach as other venues fell by the wayside in 2020

Kouvola returned to the World Rallycross Championship roster at late notice last year, the Finnish round taking the place of those that couldn't happen in the global circumstances and had only intended to be a one-off appearance.

But, partially due to the execution and success of the SET Promotion-run double-header, the event will return this season. With the Finnish public's love for motorsport and a traditional venue, it could be one of the highlights of the campaign.

Although the identity of the new World RX promoter is yet to be released by the FIA, the governing body has reiterated its assurance that the series will continue and if the right investment is made by the new promoter, there's no reason why rallycross can't continue the trajectory it was on prior to the stall around the electric transition at the end of 2018.

How the discipline's top-level electric switch for next year will be handled will hold key intrigue in the next few months as we learn more about how the new promoter plans to shape the series.

Three-time World champion Johan Kristofferson has called for a shake-up in how rallycross is run as part of the electric switch, and eyes should be on what Lydden Hill did prior to Christmas, running into darkness under a floodlight venue with great success.

World RX is no stranger to running into the evening at Formula 1-type circuits, but how about at the traditional venues too?

It's refreshing that new ICE Supercars are still in the pipeline, especially with Team RX Racing's new Proton Iriz for British and European events this year, while the electric off-road movement will take arguably its biggest step to date in March when Extreme E gets underway for the opening round: the series packed with A-list motorsport names in driver and team owner roles.

Whether a fan of electric technology or not, much of what goes on in the next 12 months will charge motorsport with high intrigue.

Hal Ridge
Rallycross editor

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COLUMNIST

MATT JAMES

MN editor reflects on the sad passing of legendary Brands commentator Brian Jones

Ayrton Senna and The Voice of Brands Hatch

Photos: Motorsport Images

Brian enjoyed helping talents, pints and rugby

It's hard to find a British motor racing fan who doesn't know the phrase "high, wide and handsome into Paddock Hill Bend". That was the catchphrase of The Voice of Brands Hatch Brian Jones, who sadly passed away shortly after the turn of the new year.

As a wide-eyed boy pressed to the fence at Brands Hatch every other weekend, I reckon that Brian's voice was the one I was most familiar with outside my own family. He perfectly captured the fizzing enthusiasm of what was happening on the Tarmac as much as a besotted youngster.

Working for fuel company BP and looking after its involvement in British motorsport, Jones's passion for racing cars – and Brands Hatch in particular – was quickly as ardent as his love for rugby. There was mutual respect from Brands Hatch boss John Webb, and a love of life in the atmospheric Chequered Flag bar at the top of the upper paddock.

It was at Webb's suggestion that Jones took the mic for the first time at the Kent venue in the early 1970s and his first task was to talk about one of the celebrity races hosted for the racing school's Ford Escorts. "I just stood there for about one minute and I didn't know what to say or how to begin – it felt like an age and I was just silent," Brian would tell me. "When I did start, it didn't seem I could stop."

And thank goodness he didn't. I will not be alone in realising what skill Jones had in conveying what was going on in front of him. Without doubt there are race callers who have a more accurate recall of chassis numbers, or what the driver of car number 27 had done in his career up to that point, but there were none who could inject the human interest into their words in the way that Jones could.

There was always speculation in his commentary, rather than a matter-of-fact instruction that has become commonplace. Often is the time you would hear "I fancy the gap to the leader has come down". His turn of phrase and the inquisitive nature of his comments would involve the spectator as much as apprise them with the black-and-white statistics, and that is what made him so engaging. The listener was under no illusion that Brian was watching the same race that they were, and he was as curious about what might happen as the audience was.

Be it a Formula 1 grand prix, a television commentary or a club meeting on the Indy circuit in Kent – or latterly the Britcar series – Jones gave each event his same treatment with his booming and welcoming tones. For a driver heading to the rostrum, meeting Jones was like meeting royalty.

A guiding hand: Jones helped young starlets

The BTCC beat: Brian in on a joke with John Cleland

And Brian was never more engaging than when holding court in the Kentagon during a race meeting – particularly during the weekend of his beloved Formula Ford Festival. He was always free with his time, ready to engage any young driver and old stager alike.

Brian's enthusiasm for the up-and-coming talent was something that never diminished and he helped craft a generation through his own media training classes, where he was able to pass on some of the tricks he had learned in over four decades on the microphone. His nurturing personality and genuine interest in people is why Brian was taken to the hearts of so many drivers and fans.

I was introduced to him in 1988 when I was on a work experience week from school and was placed at the Brands Hatch Press Office. The warmth I heard over the microphone was immediately evident when we met and he was always on hand to offer tips and advice. His self-appointed mentoring role is one that helped me hugely and one that I cherish. Eventually, I got to share a few race day commentaries with the great man and remember the time we worked at the Britcar 24 Hours at Silverstone so fondly. As a relative newcomer with the microphone myself, he was as generous as ever in helping me to find my feet (although he decided that a couple of pints and a motorhome bed were a better option than staying up all night, like I did – he was a much wiser man).

He was a mentor, a guiding hand for so many young drivers, an inspiration for a whole generation of commentators who he was only too happy to help. But, most of all, I am privileged to have called Brian a friend.

"Jones was never more engaging than when holding court in the Kentagon"

WHAT'S ON

YOUTUBE

Button and Coulthard cut loose at Lydden

See Button behind the scenes in British GT

Were you asked to cite unlikely motorsport driver-and-category combinations, perhaps silky-smooth Jenson Button in rough-and-ready rallycross would be among your first suggestions. Yet Button in our readers' Q&A this week outlines his passion for off roading, and the match is not as improbable as you might assume.

Button's father John was a rallycross competitor, therefore it was here that Jenson got his motorsport introduction. And the British Rallycross Championship 5 Nations Trophy's channel has an eight-minute feature on Button Jr, alongside David Coulthard, at Lydden Hill getting a reacquaintance with just what it is about rallycross.

It starts with Button shown poignant, and spectacular, footage of his dad competing, with inimitable Murray Walker narration. Then Jenson, with DC a nervous passenger, drives a 600bhp Beetle and is clearly moved upon hearing it was one his father competed against back in the day.

After that, wherein Button showed (perhaps genetic?) rallycross aptitude, he and Coulthard decide to race each other in more up-to-date equipment. As you can imagine they don't hold back. "Now I know why the old man loved it," Button concludes.

You can watch it at youtube.com/watch?v=N8jdaxNR3nY or you can search 'When Jenson Button took on David Coulthard at Lydden Hill'.

Button in our Q&A also tells us about his Jenson Team Rocket RJN squad, and Sky Sports F1's YouTube channel has a five-minute behind-the-scenes account of Button's race appearance with the team last November. This was in British GT's three-hour Silverstone 500 season finale, alongside best buddy, team co-owner and Le Mans winner Chris Buncombe.

And, as Button explains at the outset, the hook-up again might appear unlikely. "I could be in sunny California with my fiancée and my little boy. But no, I am here at Silverstone. It's eight degrees, it's gloomy, it's wet underfoot. You're probably wondering why?"

The feature contains intimate on-track and in-pit footage, team radio communications, and we also join Button aboard the McLaren 720S GT3 as he talks us around the lap and explains how his mount compares with a Formula 1 machine that he's more used to. And, for all his habitual charm displayed with the camera, Button clearly treats the challenge of British GT and his McLaren with respect. Nightfall late in the race also provides an unexpected challenge…

You can find this one at youtube.com/watch?v=Pl0xKqSTl7s or you can search for it with 'Silverstone 500 climax & Jenson Button's GT3 debut!'

Graham Keilloh

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Everybody breathe in! This is a moment of high drama at Paddock Hill, from Gary Hill

Britcar gets ready for blast off, by Sam Nudd

Chris Collier caught this Smart car drama

Fun in the Snett sunset by Chris Collier

Bert Verstraete's photo of Oliver Solberg

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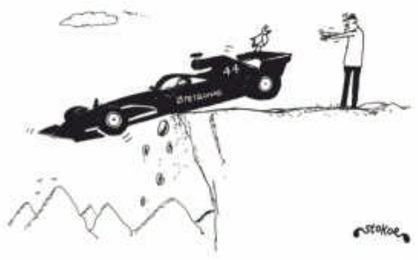

"Hold on a minute... I think I've got an idea!"

Thanks for all your entries, it was a difficult decision but the winner is Tim Bendelow. Congratulations, you will receive the original framed cartoon in the post later this month.

CHRISTMAS QUIZ ANSWERS

Thank you to everyone who took part in Motorsport News' Christmas quiz, published in the December 17-24 issue. Here are the answers to the 30 questions:

International racing
1: Finished 4.8 seconds behind Lewis Hamilton who had a 5s penalty for a collision with Alex Albon
2: Mercedes, Red Bull, Ferrari, Racing Point, McLaren, Renault, AlphaTauri
3: Mercedes (Hamilton, Russell) and Williams (Russell, Aitken)
4: Alex Albon
5: Kamui Kobayashi, Jose Maria Lopez
6: Antonio Felix da Costa, Maximilian Gunther

National racing
7: He is co-founder of Innocent smoothies
8: Only half points had been awarded in the final race due to not it completing 75% distance (it was stopped early due to rain)
9: He also competed in the British GT race at the same meeting
10: Castle Combe, Cadwell Park and Snetterton
11: 10 (BMW, Honda, Toyota, Infiniti, Ford, Vauxhall, Audi, Volkswagen, Hyundai, Mercedes)
12: Chris Buncombe

International rallying
13: SS11
14: Kalle Rovanpera
15: Gus Greensmith, Pierre-Louis Loubet, Ole Christian Veiby
16: 10 (Chile, Argentina, Portugal, Kenya, Finland, New Zealand, Germany, Rally GB, Japan, Ypres Belgium)
17: Thierry Neuville
18: Jan Kopecky (1), Rhys Yates (2)

National rallying
19: His first-ever outright international rally victory
20: Josh Moffett
21: Stephen Petch
22: Tom Cave
23: James Morgan
24: Michael Binnie

Picture round
25: Tom Oliphant
26: Ollie Mellors
27: Daniil Kvyat
28: Pontus Tidemand
29: Rob Austin
30: Tom Williams

NEXT WEEK — OUT THURSDAY, JANUARY 14

**Correct at time of going to press*

GOING THE EXTRA MILES...

Readers' Q&A: Endurance hero Oliver Gavin

WHO'S LINING UP WITH WHO?

The very latest on a crazy BTCC silly season

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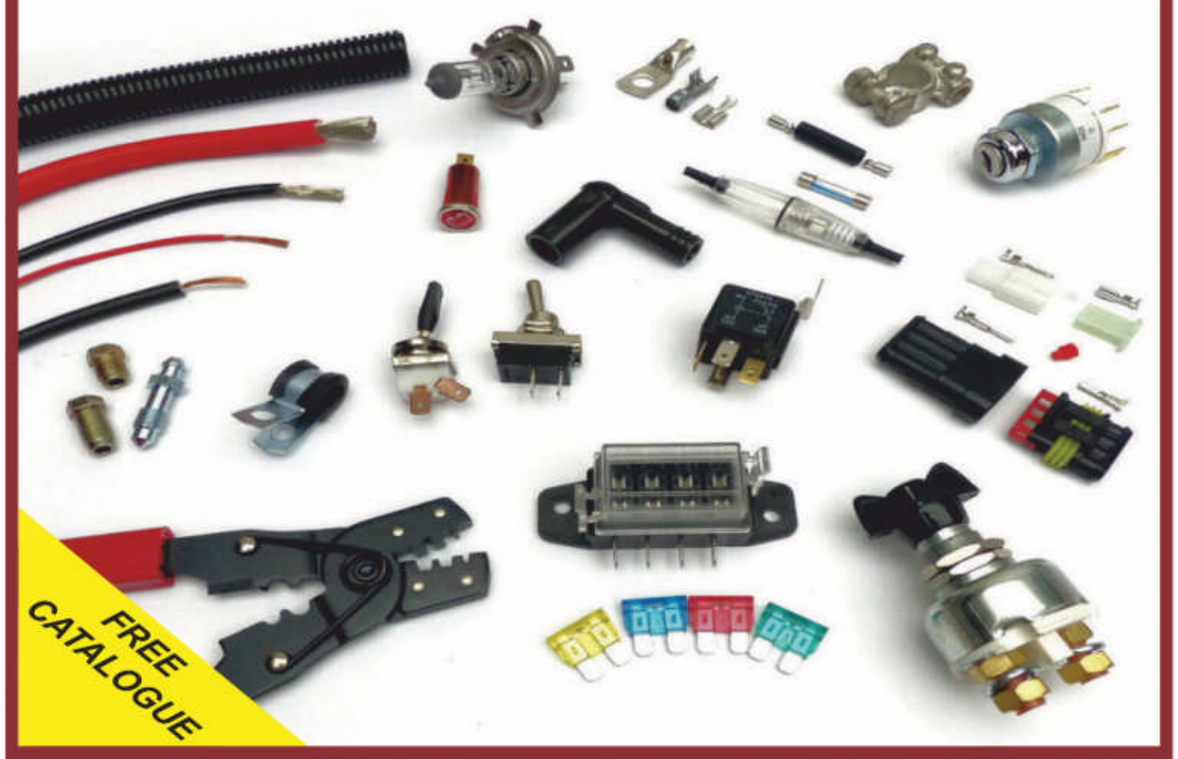

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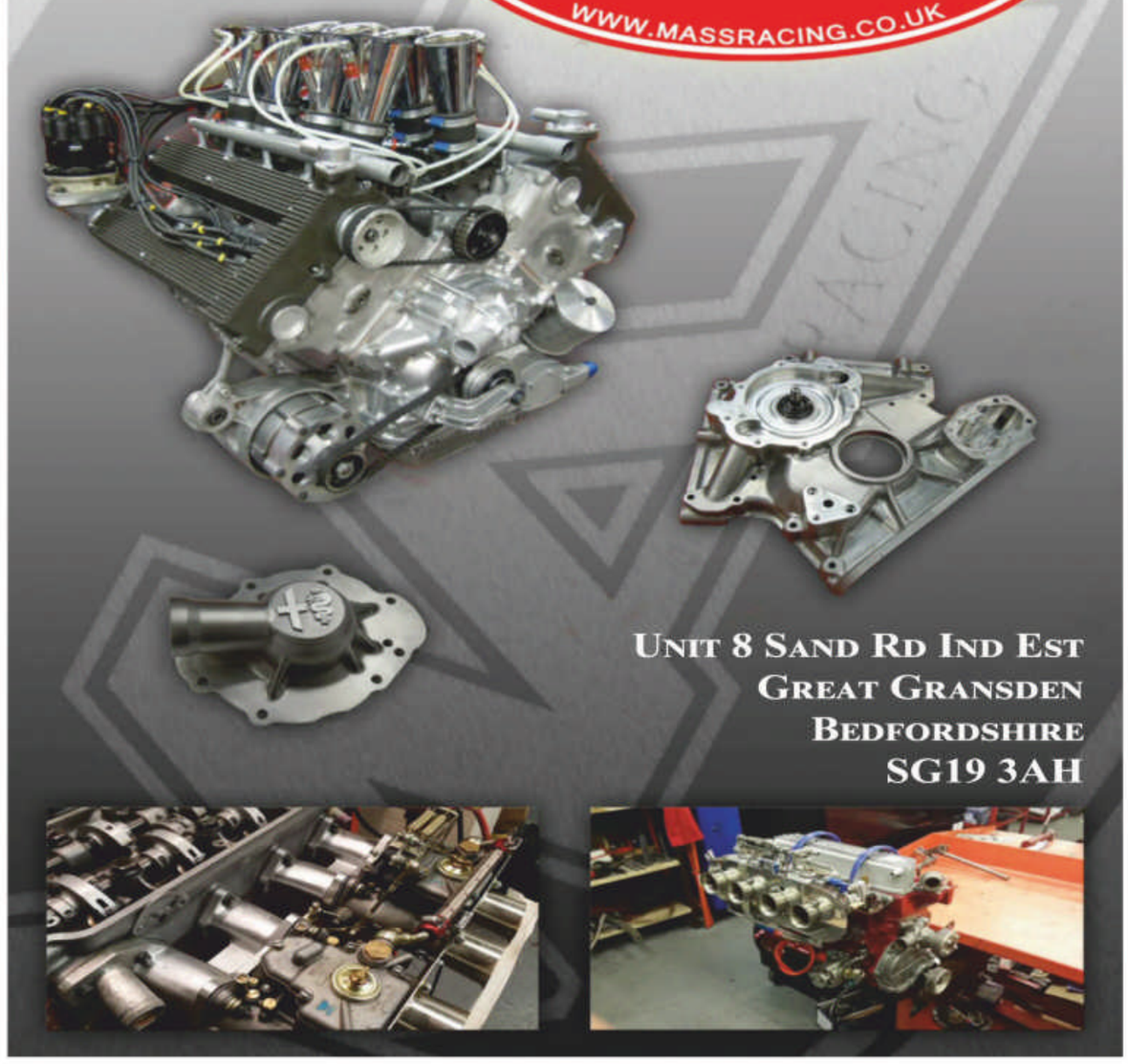

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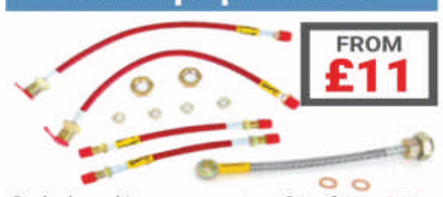

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Adjustable rose jointed	Pair	£78
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Standard bottom arm bush	Each	£2
Uprated bush set, nylon		£15
Bottom arm shaft	Each	£13
Standard bottom arms	Each	£39

Adjustable Tie Rods

Adjustable heavy duty	Pair	£32
Group 'A' adjustable	Pair	£56
Group 'A' rose jointed	Pair	£140
Standard tie rod	Each	£14
Tie rod bush, standard		£1
Tie rod bush set, uprated		£3

Suspension Parts

Top Arm (1 side)	£56
Top arm repair kit	£13
Radius arm - reconditioned (exchange)	£130
Radius arm Spindle and bush kit	£10
Knuckle joint	£4
Front shocker bottom mount	£8
Front shocker top mount	£13
Front shocker top mount - Competition	£24
Fitting kit stainless - Top Shocker mount	£5

Polyurethane Bushes

Polyurethene bushes available in Black or Red

Bump stop kit	Pair	£7
Engine steady		£6
Engine steady, ultimate		£5
Gearbox steady kits		£6
Front subframe upper kit		£8
Front subframe mount	Front	£4
Front subframe mount	Rear	£10
Rear subframe kit (early)		£7
Rear subframe kit (late)		£9
Full car kit (early)		£25
Full car kit (late)		£28
Lower arm bush kit		£6
Tie Rod bush kit		£5
Rebound buffer	Pair	£4

Body Panels

Replacement Panels	Magn	Gen
A panel Mk3 - RH/LH	£16	£23
A post hinge panel - RH/LH	£17	£28
Bonnet Mk2 on	£159	£186
Boot floor & battery box	-	£241
Boot floor rear repair	£28	-
Battery box	£28	£59
Door skin Mk3 on - RH/LH	£42	£92
Door step, shaped - RH/LH	£15	£89
Floor panel front to rear + sill RH/LH	£126	£290
Front floor well - RH/LH	£27	-
Front panel '76 on	£65	£197
Front panel to '76	£73	£197
Clubman front panel	-	£243
Front wing - early or late	£58	£105
Clubman front wing	-	£120
Pocket closing plate	-	£15
Rear floor well - RH/LH	£36	-
Rear valance all models	£19	£58
Rear valance closing assembly	£27	£40
Rear wheel arch	£63	£96
Scuttle screen lower complete	£49	£141
Seam cover front or rear From	£12	£18
Sill Inner repair - RH/LH	£17	-
Sill outer 4.5" Mk3 on - RH/LH	£19	£43
Sill outer 9" Mk3 on - RH/LH	£26	-

NEW MK1 Panels

Heritage approved, manufactured by Mini Sport

AVAILABLE AGAIN!

Pressed side and rear panels to exact original Mk1 Mini specifications

Left side panel 1-piece with B post	£1938
Right side panel 1-piece with B post	£1938
Rear panel 1-piece pressing	£921

Pressed from 1-piece of high grade steel

Body Shells

Largest stocks of Heritage bodyshells in the world. MK1, Mk4, SPi, MPi Sportspack & Clubman.

FROM ONLY **£8954**

Mk1 £12,549

Screens

Windscreens

Front		Rear	
Clear	£37	Mk2/3 clear	£111
Clear heated	£233	Mk1 clear	£142
Tinted	£45	Mk2/3 clear	
Tinted heated	£204	Heated	£192
Top tinted	£43	Mk1 clear heated	£228
Top tinted heated	£213		

Rubber Seals and Strips

Screen seal front	From £10		
Screen seal rear	£11	MK3 Door seal	£14
Chrome locking strip	£7	Mk3 door outer chrome	£19
Quarter light seals		Mk4 boot lid seal	£9
opening type	£8	Sill trim chrome deluxe	£13
Fixed type	£9	Roof gutter trim black	£11

Bumpers

From **£39**

O.E. spec		Overiders & Bars	
Stainless	£60	Mk1 kit	£143
Chrome	From £39	Mk1 kit & bumpers	£281
Stainless	From £44	Mk2 overiders kit	
Black	£48	From	£54

Mirrors

Stainless early	Each	£19
Black early	Each	£21
Black late	Pair	£35
Bullet early chrome	Each	£30
Bullet late chrome	Each	£32
Downton style	Each	£21
Cooper chrome	Each	£32
Cooper white	Pair	£50
Classic clip on	Each	£20
Early wing mounted	Pair From	£31

Brightwork

S/S Headlamp peaks		£10
S/S Headlamp stoneguards		£11
Mk3 chrome no. plate lamp		£21
S/S seam mouldings	Pair	£26
Boot hinges - chrome		£12
Plain Door handle scoops		£7
Alloy dip stick: blue, red, silver		£9
Union Jack badge		£5
Cooper boot badge '96 on		£12
GB boot badge		£5
Cooper S Mk3 bonnet badge		£23
Standard locking fuel cap		£14
Monza style fuel cap		£25
Aston style fuel cap		£18
Cooper fuel cap		£36

Wipers

Kit: - arms, blades, washer jets, bezel kit & blanking plugs **NOW ONLY £36**

Stainless Steel			Washer Jets	
Wiper arm	Each	£6	Twin	£7
Wiper blade	Each	£6	Single	£7
Wiper plug	Each	£4		
Wiper bezel kit		£6		

Grilles

ONLY **£61**

Cooper int release	£61
Cooper ext release	£55
Cooper lamp holes	£103
Mk 5 wavy int	£88
Mk 5 wavy ext	£88
Mk3 chrome	£85
Mk1 Austin wavy	£94
Mk1 Austin Cooper	£94
Mk1 Morris Cooper	£86
Mk1 mustache surr.	£100
Mustache ends Each	£12
Mk3 surrounds Each	£12
Mk3 top surround	£19
Grille buttons chrome or black	£10

ONLY **£103**

ONLY **£94**

ONLY **£88**

Internal bonnet release kit ONLY **£31**

Load Liner

NOW ONLY **£52**

Light Systems

Quadoptic Headlamps

Quadoptic H4 Halogen Conversion

LHD Pair **£49**

RHD Pair **£42**

H4 Headlamp Assemblies, includes headlamp bowl plus inner bezel, suit LHD or RHD

Pre '97 Mini	From	£47
MPi Headlamp	From	£47
Headlamp leveling motor	'97 on	£44
Halogen crystal headlamp	Angel eye	£50
Headlamp adjuster kit		£4
Headlamp rim - chrome		£10
Headlamp bowl - plastic		£12

Works Lamp Bar Kit

Kit: Stainless lamp bar, wiring loom, 2 drive & 2 fog lamps

Lamp Bar **£61**

Full Kit **£157**

Historic Competition Parts

Roll Cages

RHD & LHD available

Rear Race NOW ONLY **£275**

Rear Rally NOW ONLY **£216**

Front NOW ONLY **£198**

Multi point FROM ONLY **£712**

6- Point Bolt-in NOW ONLY **£1144**

Multi point weld in cage		£712
Multi point bolt in cage		£1254
Door bars	Pair	£124
Roll cage padding, 80cm		£10
Custom Cages Six Point Bolt-In		
Mini Roll Cage - Black		£1144

Sump Guards

Steel		Alloy or S/Steel	
Steel	£61	Alloy - with holes	£74
Extension	£51	S/Steel - with holes	£74
RAC dural	£105	Alloy - FLETCHER	£74
Monte Carlo	£87	S/Steel - FLETCHER	£74

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securon

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4 Point From	£49

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4 Point From	£85	4 Eyebolt & plate kit	£14

Fire Extinguishers

Full range available online	
AFFF Electrical kit	£707
AFFF Mechanical kit	£321
2.4 ltr AFFF Hand held	£89

Classic 10" Tyres

Blockley Classic	£76
Dunlop Weathermaster	£178
Dunlop Aquajet	£146
Avon CR6ZZ	£196
Yokohama A032	£64
Maxsport Hakka	£120
Maxsport RB1	£117

Safety Equipment

Battery master switch	£24
Battery cut out switch	£7
Pro map light	£33
Bonnet pin kit From	£7
Safety sticker sheet	£3
11" Door numbers	£1
Door squares	£4

Works Mini Parts

Headlamp Covers	£121
Reversing lamp	£156
Grille Cover	£92
Jacking point brackets	£50
Front splash guards	£99
Rear mudflaps	£121
Rear screen de-mist	£78
Crackle black dashboard	£79
Stopwatch panel From	£36

Spot Lights

Pair ONLY **£34**

Rally giant spot lamp kit	£43
Road runner H3 spot lamp kit	£22

Side Repeater

Clear type	£4
Amber type	£3

Indicators

Early - push fit amber plastic lamp unit	£7
Early - push fit clear plastic lamp unit	£7
Mk3/4 - clear lamp unit (screw type)	£7
Mk5 - clear lamp '97-'01	£10

Rear Lights & Lenses

Mk1 Rear lamp RH or LH	Each	£49
Mk1 Rear indicator lens RH or LH	Each	£7
Mk2/3 Rear lamp RH or LH	Each	£54
Mk2/3 Rear lens RH or LH	Each	£17
Mk2/3 Rubber seal RH or LH	Each	£7
Mk4 Rear lamp RH or LH	Each	£43

Clear Lenses
Supplied as pairs complete with orange and red bulbs, upper lenses only
NOW ONLY £13

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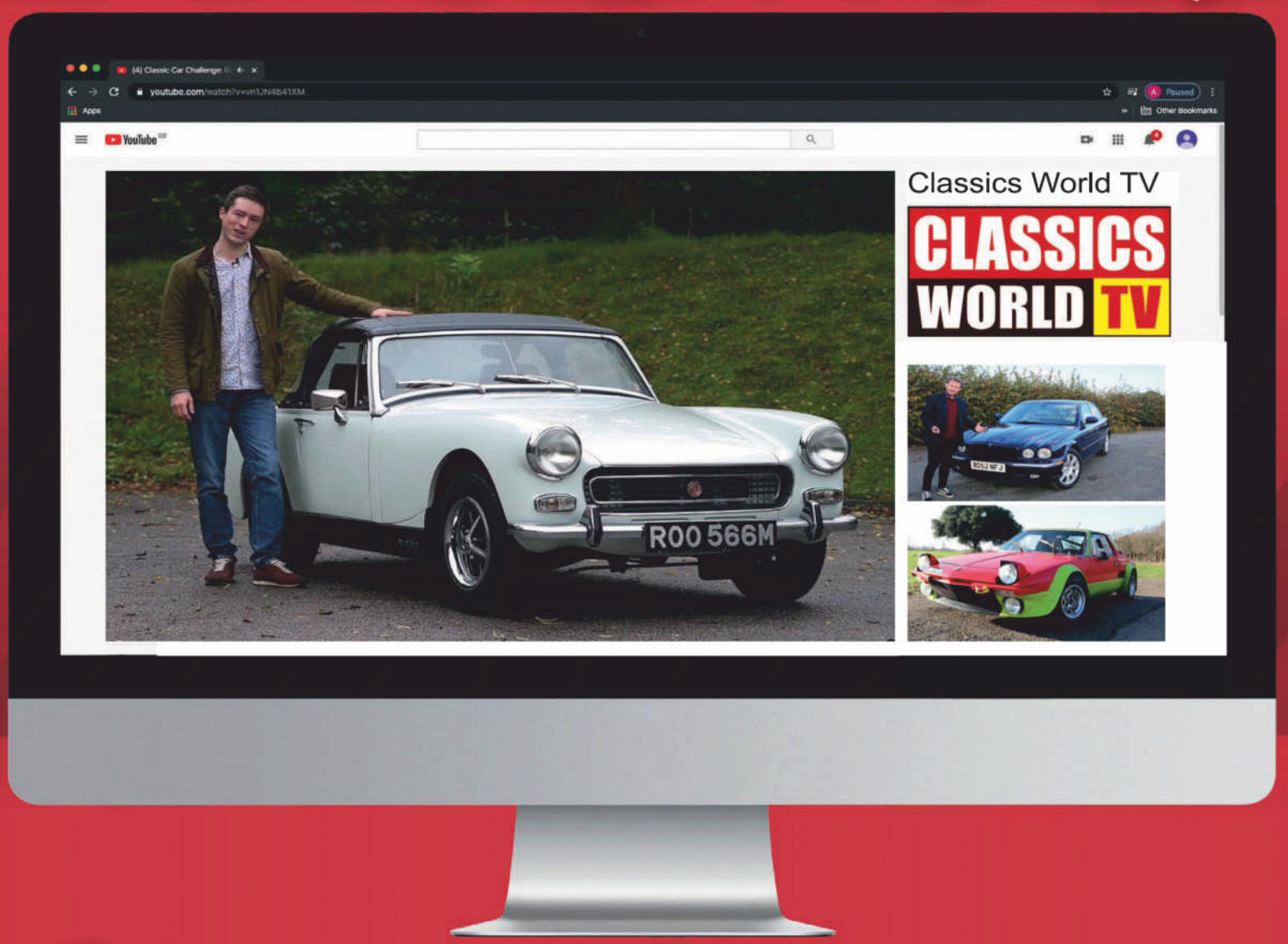

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